

# CHEMIST & DRUGGIST

INCORPORATING RETAIL CHEMIST

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Credit card  
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High Street  
sales outlook

Analgesics  
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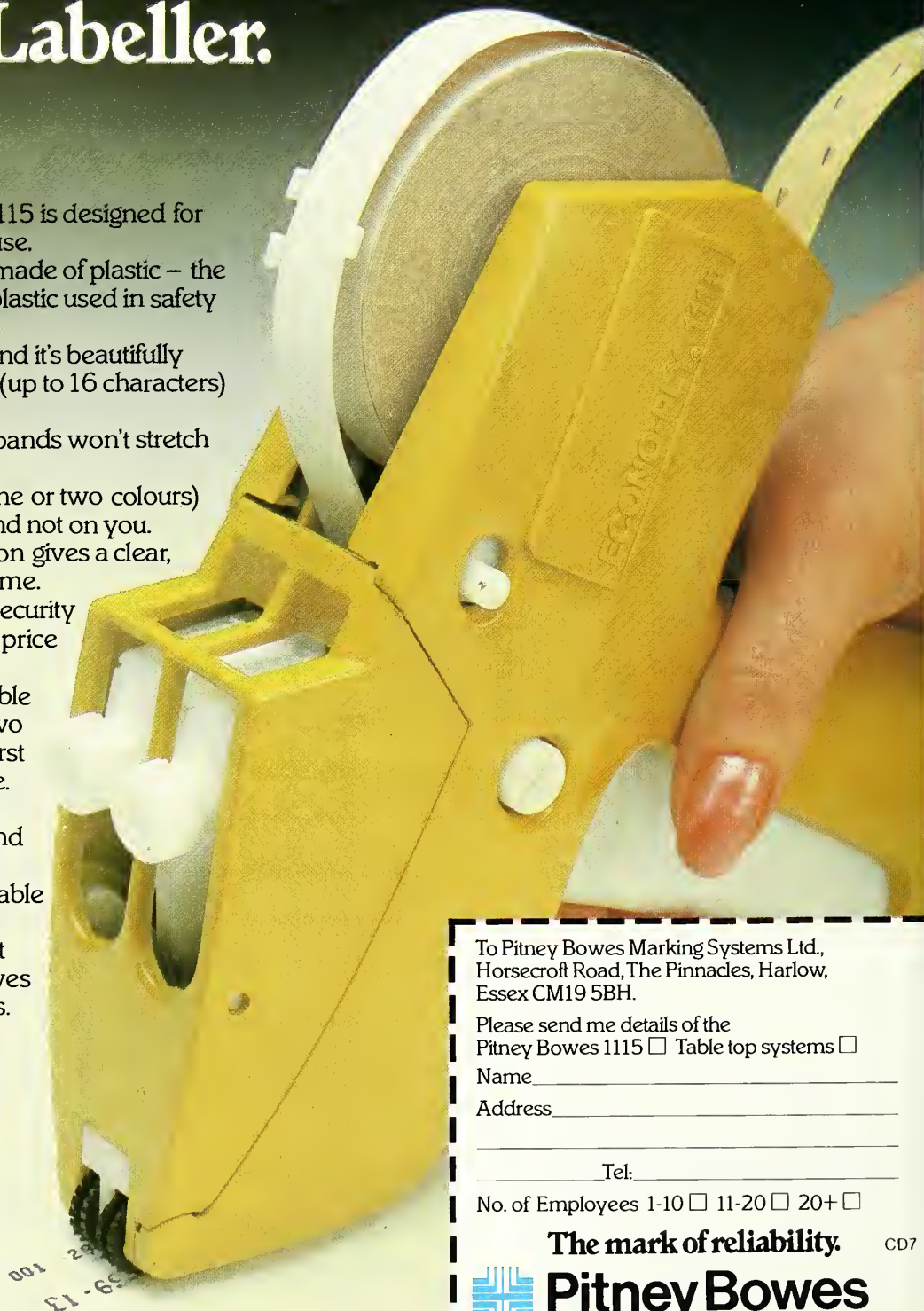
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Address

Tel.

No. of Employees 1-10 ☐ 11-20 ☐ 20+ ☐

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# CHEMIST & DRUGGIST

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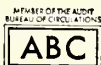
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## COMMENT

### Marching for . . . ?

Pharmacists will next week have an option to protest directly to Mrs Thatcher, the Prime Minister, about the recent notional salary increase. The London Group Pharmaceutical Executive is organising a delegation to march on Downing Street and to hand in a letter (p308).

We said in this column when the increase was announced (*C&D* August 18, p239) that pharmacies badly need more money now to halt closures. We also said there was hopefully greater significance in the outcome of the negotiations because for once a Minister of Health had offered cash around the table and appeared decisive and fair.

Clearly the London group does not share that sentiment—it feels the Department of Health has snatched back its increase by offsetting it against previous underfunding. All pharmacist contractors will agree with the group that the present system of remuneration results in gross inequalities and that more money is needed.

The group calls for the Prime Minister to reverse the snatch-back decision and to order an immediate payment of the increase, back dated; it also demands that the overpayment "slate" should be wiped clean, for which there is a precedent in a recent dentists' pay award.

That would appear to be in accord with the independent remuneration panel's recommendation that whilst the panel is deliberating, the Department of Health should not seek to reduce the present rates of professional fee and on-cost allowance payable (*C&D* August 11, p228). Some contractors have interpreted that as a recommendation for a balance sheet standstill and they therefore say the Minister should not have compensated the overpayment with the new money.

These may be valid points of view, but the marchers from Lambeth to Whitehall must be certain in their own minds that they will get more than sore feet out of their Thursday afternoon. Presumably the London group feels that it must act independently of the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee in attracting publicity for the latest round in the long-running fight between contractors and the Department—despite the fact that a protester, Mr Blum, is newly elected to PSNC.

But publicity is a two-edged sword which unless wielded expertly can cut the ground from under the feet of one's own side. A small delegation in white coats at No. 10 may attract the media; so would a quarter-mile column of marchers (even if it didn't attract London commuters' sympathy), but a few dozen would not be spectacular—they might even be a spectacle.

Pharmacy's case has already been taken to the public with considerable success—a million signatures and a Commons debate. Support may again be required if the panel recommends more than the Government is willing to concede. However, the current "balance sheet" arguments cannot adequately be understood by contractors, let alone the public. And while they must never be allowed to forget the chemist's plight, neither must they be bored with the issue. Can the London march really add new interest?



# Pharmacists march to Downing Street

The London Group Pharmaceutical Executive is arranging a delegation of pharmacists to hand in a letter of protest to the Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, at 10 Downing Street on Thursday, September 6.

The letter, which will be signed by all chairmen and vice-chairmen of Greater London LPCs, will protest at the snatch-back by the Department of Health and Social Security of the increase in notional salary. It will point out the gross inequalities of the system—continual and intentional underfunding and the annual underestimating of the balance sheet by the DHSS. The London Group believes this results in a continual underpayment in terms of real cash, money sorely needed by contractors to maintain their viability and level of service to the community.

Mrs Thatcher will be urged to reverse the DHSS snatch-back decision and to order immediate payment of the extra 3½p per prescription increase under the notional salary award, plus backpay (backdated to January 1) which for an average contractor, dispensing 2,800 prescriptions per month, would give a lump sum of almost £800. This would bring him nearly halfway to the 8p per prescription extra awarded recently to doctors.

The letter will also stress that pharmacists should have any suggested overpayment, due to underfunding and underestimating of the balance sheet, wiped clean. This move was recently approved for dentists *without* any snatch-



Blum: hoping for solid support

back of their pay award.

The delegation, which will be led by Mr Stanley Blum, is to meet outside the House of the Pharmaceutical Society, 1 Lambeth High Street, London SE1, at 2.30 pm for the march to Downing Street. All contractors, pharmacists and their colleagues working in the NHS are urged to join the delegation, preferably attired in white coats.

This will be the first ever public protest by the pharmaceutical profession in response to Departmental injustice to contractor pharmacists and Mr Blum is hoping for some solid support. "I think pharmacists are becoming more aware of their rights and the need to do something positive about them", he told *C&D*.

□ If chemists require transport, they can contact their LPC secretary.

## VAT protest from NPA

The National Pharmaceutical Association has sent a strongly-worded protest to HM Customs & Excise about the Government's proposal to abolish monthly returns for Value Added Tax as part of cuts in public expenditure.

A spokesman for the Association said they were very concerned about the proposal. "It will mean that our members will be lending Customs & Excise three times as much interest-free cash as they are at present", he said. "It will cause tremendous cash flow problems."

On the question of the removal from the VAT register of the small trader, the NPA thinks it is highly unlikely that the limit will be raised to a level which would affect the vast majority of their members. They stress it is in the chemists' interest, even if they are below the limit of taxable turnover for VAT registration, presently £10,000 per year, to apply for entry to the VAT register, because of the opportunity it provides to claim back the tax on medicines dispensed. These are not subject to VAT at the time they are dispensed.

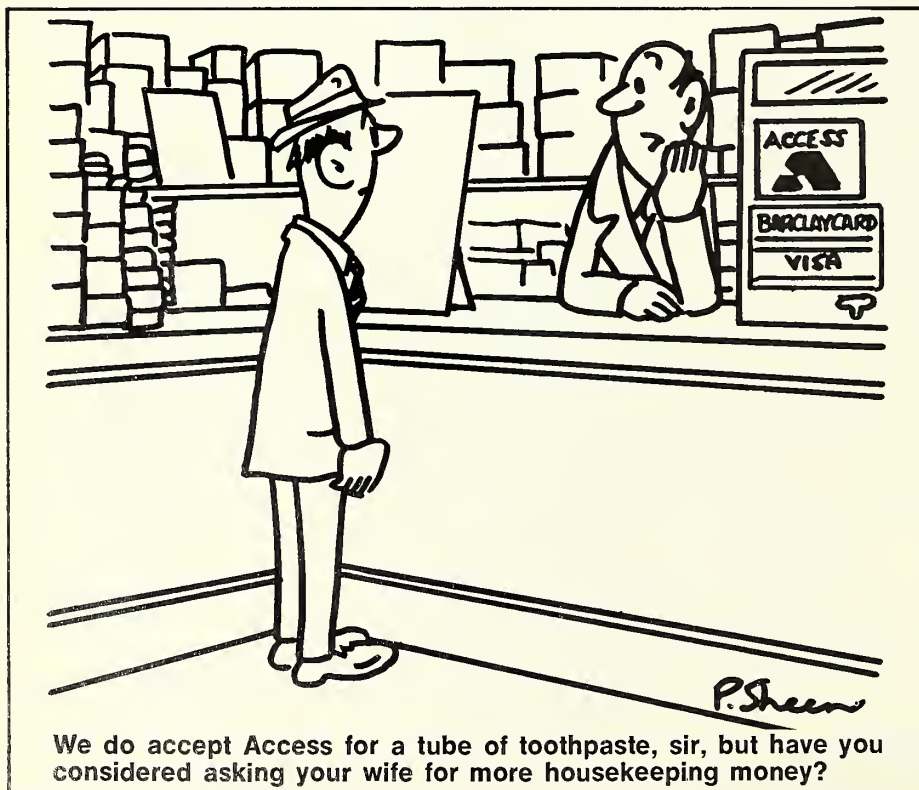
□ Mr John Nott, Secretary of State for Trade, is engaging outside consultants to review the burden imposed on businesses, particularly small businesses of filling in administrative forms issued by the Department of Trade. Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Co, in association with the Economists Advisory Group Ltd, will spend two months analysing the 500 or so administrative forms issued by the Department and consulting those who use them to see whether the number and complexity can be reduced.

## Plea to simplify price marking

Mr T. P. Astill, National Pharmaceutical Association deputy secretary, has again called on the Department of Trade to simplify the proposed Price Marking (Bargain Offers) Order 1979.

He says in his letter that NPA does not disagree with the substance of the order but he seriously believes the legislation will fail because few retailers or consumers will be able to understand it. There are more than eight foolscap pages of close type. Mr Astill also points out that the NPA would not support any retailer who promulgates misleading bargain offers.

The letter adds that only specialists can now be expected to learn the law's detailed provisions. "Yet I have no doubt that retailers will be expected to comply exactly with the new rules and that consumer representative organisations will not hesitate to publicise the names of shopkeepers and advertisers who, through ignorance or inadvertence, slip up". The NPA criticised the length and detail of the order when it was first laid before Parliament.





# Third world policy of drugs firms attacked

A BBC Radio 4 programme this week accused the pharmaceutical industry of promoting to the third world drugs which are "at best irrelevant and at worst dangerous".

In the first of a two-part documentary, "In sickness or in wealth", it was said that whereas Britain spends only 8.9 per cent of its NHS budget on drugs, in some third world countries drugs account for up to 55 per cent of health expenditure—without tackling the underlying causes of disease, namely poverty, malnutrition, and polluted drinking water.

Third-world pharmacies were shown to be the source of many drugs which would not be acceptable in the base countries of their manufacturers. A number of over-the-counter purchases were recorded in which the pharmacist or shopkeeper was pressed to confirm that there were "no problems" with the drugs requested. These included a streptomycin-penicillin combination ("for any disease"); anabolic steroids ("OK for children") and massive vitamin sales in Bangladesh where the price of a single bottle would keep a family for a week.

Other criticisms included the industry's failure to communicate the dangers of drugs to prescribers to the extent required in the west and an implied over-statement of product advantages—such as vitamin B<sub>12</sub> as effective "even in depressive state and insomnia".

From Thailand came a report of a "multicoloured, multipurpose" pack of about six tablets available in drug stores—containing two different antibiotics, one steroid, paracetamol, vitamin C and Valium. "I expect it's a kill or cure policy," said the presenter.

Company replies to criticism placed the blame either on the countries' regulatory authorities or on prescribers for not heeding warnings (though it was said these were not always in a language spoken by health care professionals in the countries concerned).

The next programme promises to look at "signs of cooperation, not confrontation, between the pharmaceutical industry and the third world."

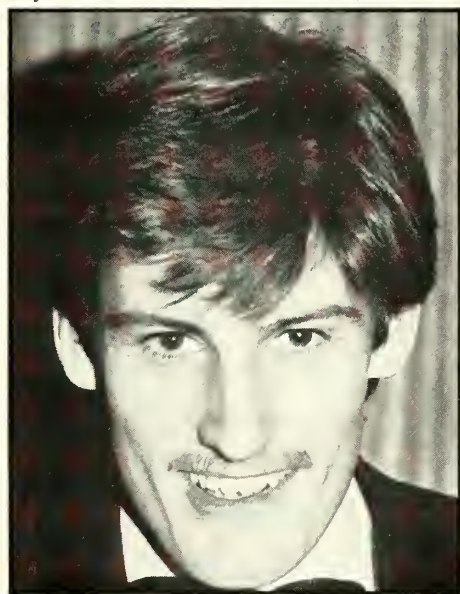
## London Co-op to drop stamps

A plan to discontinue dividend stamps and reduce prices by about 8.9 per cent is being put into effect by the London Co-operative Society. One branch in Hounslow was converted two weeks ago into a "Pricefighter" store with reduced prices in its food section and in the pharmacy. About 12 more Pricefighter stores are planned in the London area in the next five or six months. A spokesman for the Hounslow branch said that they had had a 300 per cent increase in turnover in the first week.

# Student selection should maintain 'broad variety'

Pharmaceutical students fear that any cutback in intake, as forecast last week in the Press, will favour students with higher academic qualifications and that students whose personality and vocational aptitude benefit them for the profession will be excluded.

Mr Neil Gibson, president of the British Pharmaceutical Students Association, in a statement issued on behalf of the executive committee, says the Association's view, that they are against any reduction in student intake, was ex-



Gibson: personality should be considered

pressed in the defeat of a motion at the Cardiff conference in 1978. "From reports we have received, it sounds unlikely that pharmacy will be affected," Mr Gibson told *C&D*, "but should there be a 6 per cent cutback, we would like to know how this will be made. We hope the selection procedure used by schools of pharmacy would maintain a broad variety of undergraduates, taking into account not only academic ability but also personality and vocational aptitude".

The Pharmaceutical Society has also expressed concern about the difficulties schools of pharmacies would face if funds were further reduced. A spokesman for the Society said any exacerbation of the financial restrictions within higher education will no doubt create additional operational difficulties for schools of pharmacy. "However, it might be that restrictions in student numbers will fall more heavily on courses of a less vocational nature," he said, "This will be a matter for each academic institution to decide in relation to their constituent departments. They are aware of the Society's views on the future manpower requirements of the profession".

The University Grants Committee has warned the country's 45 universities to be cautious when making firm offers for next autumn and advised them not to commit themselves to more than 94 per cent of this year's entry.

## CRM threat to revoke licences

The Committee on Review of Medicines has written to pharmaceutical companies asking for good reasons why licences for 219 products should not be revoked.

A Department of Health spokesman told *C&D* that the drugs involved were antirheumatics, analgesics and psychotropics, mainly combination products. None of them were considered to be dangerous, otherwise action would be taken to withdraw them, but many were old fashioned and had been superseded by better alternatives.

The companies involved must now decide whether to submit evidence that the licences should not be revoked, and go through the statutory appeals procedure if necessary, or discontinue the products altogether.

## Bias against small businesses alleged

The Association of Independent Business has rejected the Wilson Committee's conclusion in its interim report that there is no "systematic bias" against small firms in the UK financial system.

The association, which claims to represent 25,000 companies, including those

with a turnover of more than £1m, says in a recent assessment of the report, that such a bias does exist and should be acknowledged. It urges the Wilson Committee to make better use of the plentiful amount of research material available to it. Otherwise, it says, "a valuable opportunity to examine ways of helping the British economy out of its present predicament will have been lost".

The association argues for fresh sources of external capital for small companies to be administered in the private sector, rather than by government, and insists that the committee's terms of reference should have allowed it to appraise the effects of taxation on smaller companies.

## Watch old stock

Promotional packs which are left on shelves for too long can cause problems—as evidenced by a recent complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority. A consumer bought a bottle of Matey which was carrying a promotional collar for the "Paint a Matey crew" competition. It was not until she took the collar off she discovered that the period for entries had expired five months previously. She turned to the ASA who upheld the complaint. Nicholas are quoted as regretting the inconvenience caused by this error.



# Inflation may slow sales growth

Announcement of the Government's new tax price index (last week, p274) coincided with the unveiling of the July Retail Price Index showing an annual inflation rate soaring at 15.6 per cent.

A record increase of 4.3 per cent occurred in the month to mid-July, with about 75 per cent of this directly attributable to the June budget increases in value added tax, tobacco and petrol duties and prescription charges.

Chemists' goods are included under miscellaneous goods in the figures issued by the Department of Trade every month. The index figures for this category stood at 225.6 for April (15 January 1974=100) compared with 214.2 for all items, at 227.1 for May, compared with 215.9, 228.7 for June compared with 219.6 and 243.6 for July compared with 229.1.

The index of the total value of chemists and photographic goods, excluding NHS receipts, shows a corresponding increase. In April, the index figure stood at 272 (a 15 per cent increase over a year earlier) in May at 288 (14 per cent up) and in June at 334 (an increase of 22 per cent over last year). The latter figure represented a bigger increase than that for retail sales as a whole, which increased by only 20 per cent.

It is unwise to base forecasts of consumer spending on the sharp-angled graphs of recent months. Pre-budget spending sprees raised retail sales to record levels in the early summer. Figures published by the Central Statistical Office show a consumer boom between April and June—before the big VAT increase well publicised by the Conservatives—greater than anticipated.

The latest estimate of the volume of consumer spending for this period by the Central Statistical Office, is £17.67bn (at 1975 prices, seasonally adjusted), 3½ per cent higher than in the previous three months.

The Department of Trade's provisional estimate of the seasonally adjusted index of the volume of retail sales in July is



Three pharmacists from Rugby, Sunderland and High Wycombe were recently presented with a video tape recorder by Unichem's deputy chairman, Mr Norman Sampson (third from left). Video tape recorders were the major prizes in a "Members Only" competition organised by Unichem, linked to a promotion of the Society's own-brand range of baby-care products. Entrants had to match the photographs of six famous babies to the appropriate name. Mr Sampson and Mr Bill Hart, Unichem's assistant commercial director (right) are shown with the winners and their wives. Mr and Mrs M. G. Ridgway (left), Mr and Mrs P. Snowdon (centre), and Mr and Mrs R. Nixon (right)

108½ (1971 = 100), indicating a fall of about 10 per cent from the high June level, but if June and July together are compared with April and May, there was little change in total sales.

The consumer boom preceding the rise in VAT has made it difficult to draw conclusions from the fall in retail sales last month and the slowdown in the growth of bank lending.

All the forecasts indicate a marked slowing down in consumer spending for the rest of the year. City experts gave the budget a warm welcome, largely because it encourages saving rather than spending, but industrial and consumer organisations were less enthusiastic. Management Horizons believes the combined effect of the budget and the underlying decline in the growth of real incomes will lead to a "considerably lower growth in consumer spending in 1980, compared to the levels achieved during the recovery period of 1978-79." It believes that total retail sales volume increases of 2.9 per cent in 1979 will drop to only 1.5 per cent in 1980. The 2.9 per cent for this year, it says, represents a strong first-half growth and a much lower second half one. It is more optimistic about next year's growth which, it believes, will accelerate in the second six month period.

The Treasury continues to make gloomy predictions about the UK's out-

put over the next few years, warning of little or no growth. The Confederation of British Industry is equally anxious about erosion of the competitiveness of British industry in both domestic and overseas markets.

In the August issue of *Retail Business* the Economist Intelligence Unit anticipates a slight boost in consumer spending as a result of the June and subsequent budgets but, it adds, "the underlying prospects for the growth of real spending are only moderate in terms of growth experienced in the past". It foresees a 2½ per cent annual medium term growth in consumer spending with brighter prospects for durables than non-durables. The EIU points out that because of the way income tax reductions are being phased, their effect on spending will be erratic with the backdated rebates swelling spending in July and October.

Inflation is another imponderable, with forecasts ranging from 15 to 20 per cent. The Government suggests it will hit 17.5 per cent in November and decline to nearer 13 per cent by this time next year, while the City is putting its money on a rate nearer 20 per cent for this year. Many retailers, however, may agree with Jim Bradwell, buying director of Woolworth, who predicted a 15 per cent rise in prices over the next 12 months, the rate being kept low by continued High Street price cutting.

## FORECASTS OF CONSUMER SPENDING, REAL INCOMES

£m.

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Real incomes at 1975 base	72,948	77,590	81,470	83,750	85,595	87,730	89,665	91,275	93,100
% change on previous year	-1.8	6.4	5.0	2.8	2.2	2.5	2.2	1.8	2.0
Consumer spending: actual	83,585	93,738	113,520	134,295	155,565	176,425	197,415	219,430	244,005
at 1975 base	62,954	66,397	69,050	71,055	72,830	74,725	76,370	77,895	79,455
% change on previous year	-1.0	5.5	4.0	2.9	2.5	2.6	2.2	2.0	2.0
Consumer prices 1975=100	132.8	144.2	164.6	189.0	213.6	236.1	258.5	281.7	307.1
% change on previous year	14.9	8.6	14.0	15.0	13.0	10.5	9.5	9.0	9.0
Savings ratio*	13.7	14.4	15.2	15.6	14.9	14.8	14.8	14.7	14.7

\* Savings as a percentage of disposable income.

Source: Economic Trends, EIU estimates.



# Time for smaller chemists to think again about credit cards?

Woolworth court customers with credit cards

Credit card launch by Boots

Boots and the National Westminster Bank are co-operating in two new credit schemes in which customers without bank accounts or bank credit cards will be able to participate.

Tesco join the credit race

Tesco's are the latest supermarket chain to introduce a credit card—in their case the Checkout card. Customers can get credit on all purchases—food and non-food—of £20 and above with credit of up to 30 times the customer's monthly payment. Interest charged is 1.75 per cent but when the account has been closed the interest rate will be 10 per cent.

Personal Budget Scheme purchase monthly

Now that Boots have cast their bait into the credit card stream, perhaps the time has come for smaller retail chemists to take a fresh look at the alternative schemes available while the tide is still favourable.

It seems that some chemists have already seen the writing on the wall. Since the announcement by Boots, the National Pharmaceutical Association has received several inquiries from members interested in joining some sort of scheme.

Boots are following in the steps of other retail multiples who have already introduced credit schemes. Woolworth, Tesco and International Stores all launched in-store credit cards this year and Marks & Spencer will be extending its scheme to all its 252 stores by the end of the year. Boots are introducing two simultaneously, a credit card and a personal loan scheme, and the former offers similar facilities to those of the other chains. Most provide budget account arrangements with customers paying a fixed monthly sum (usually between £5 and £20) and they are then allowed credit of between 12 and 30 times this amount. Interest on outstanding balances varies—Woolworth, for instance, charge 2 per cent, Boots 1.85 and Marks & Spencer between 1.85 and 2 per cent. The latter chain offers the added incentive of an annual rate of interest of 7½ per cent on credit balances. The majority of these schemes can be used by people without bank accounts and as such are tapping a completely new source of wealth—the impulse buyer without ready cash or a bank account, usually a housewife.

Credit card schemes also encourage customer loyalty—at least, that is what retailers hope—but this may become less important as more and more chains get on the bandwagon. The degree of loyalty may depend on the quality of individual service the customer might be justified in expecting in return.

## In-house schemes

But is any form of in-house credit or budget account system viable for small retailers? The NPA thinks not. Any scheme which they or a wholesaler could operate, they say, could not be more

competitive than the facilities already offered by the big credit card companies. The NPA already offers a concessionary rate of between 3½ and 4 per cent to members on Barclaycard facilities but they think Access is uninterested in having similar arrangement, as it might prejudice terms agreed with individual retail chemists. A spokesman for Access told *C&D*, however, that the company has changed its policy towards trade associations. "It was our policy at one time to deal with individual outlets but this has now been modified". It seems Access would welcome an approach from the NPA if they feel there is anything to be gained from an agreement.

Access do not discriminate against chemists, treating them like any other retail outlet, although they will not offer card facilities for NHS prescriptions because of the time involved for very small items. If a chemist approaches them, they consider the merits on both sides to see if it is a worthwhile proposition, each case being judged independently. However, both Access and Barclaycard are understandably cagey about their precise requirements for a "worthwhile proposition".

## Chemists in top 20

As far as Barclaycard are concerned, chemists feature in or around the top 20 in their breakdown of retail traders. Their policy is to recruit any retail outlet selling goods that cardholders want to buy, which for chemists would mean usually those who included photographic equipment and/or perfumes in their stock. Growth in the use of credit in chemist shops fluctuates from quarter to quarter, peaking at seasonal times like Christmas, but Barclaycard say it parallels growth in other trades.

An argument often put forward against credit cards by smaller chemists is that the average purchase is only about £1, a sum they regard as not being worth the work involved in processing each transaction. But the credit companies themselves are reluctant to impose a definite minimum for fear of inhibiting the use of credit cards. With purchases of £2 and over becoming more common, especially when photographic equipment and high

quality cosmetics are sold, the smaller chemist could well now be an attractive proposition for Access or Barclaycard.

The two giants are running neck and neck in the credit card race with each claiming a monthly increase in cardholders of 40,000. Barclaycard say their total number of cardholders is 4.6m and their turnover last year was £800m. Access put their total at 4m, and their projected turnover for the 12 months ending October/November 1979 is estimated at £1,000m. Nevertheless, there is still plenty of slack to be taken up: only 20 per cent of adults in this country own a credit card, against 80 per cent in the USA. That may be why the big two have no fear of any competition from the retail multiples' rush into credit cards. On the contrary, Access say many in-house schemes complement theirs and the general effect is to generate more interest in credit cards. Barclaycard is also happy about the trend. Their retail credit division, Barclaycare, which provides funds and services for stores, has had 700 inquiries from retailers since it started in August 1978.

Those retail chemists who have taken the plunge seem to have no regrets. Don Ross, who runs a pharmacy in Bourne, Lincolnshire, has been using Access for three years and Barclaycard for one, and says he would not be without them now. "There are certain customers who use credit cards and I find the same names cropping up, week in, week out. They are nearly all middle class housewives who don't carry much cash around with them," he said. Mr Ross finds the usual credit card purchase is between £2 and £10. As well as for photographic equipment and perfumes, people use cards for such items as the more expensive sunglasses and Scholls. But the volume of his credit card business still only accounts for less than 10 per cent of the whole.

This may not, however, always be so. Use of credit is accelerating at an alarming rate, spurred on by inflation and the increasing competitiveness of High Street trading. The advent of instant cash transfer will hasten the process. The time may not be so distant when cash-tills will be discarded for transaction terminals linked by telephone lines to computers.

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## September Savers!

Product	Pack Qty x size	Prom. Cost (ex VAT)	Apocaire *RSP.
Farleys Rusks	12 x Family	4.65	47p
Lil-Lets Mini	24 x 20's	7.93	45½p
Regular	24 x 20's	8.48	49p
Super	24 x 20's	9.24	53p
Super Plus	24 x 20's	9.85	56½p
Signal Toothpaste	12 x economy (85ml)	3.36	39p
Supersoft Hairspray	12 x 200g	4.23	49p
Shampoo	12 x 150ml	3.04	35p
Johnson's Baby Lotion	24 x 120ml	8.38	49p
C & G Strained Baby Meals	12 x 78g	1.40	14p
Junior Baby Meals	12 x 113g	1.61	16p
Toddler Baby Meals	12 x 170g	1.94	19½p
Handy Andies Pack	144	6.18	6p
Delph Lemon Skin Freshener/Cleansing Milk	12 x 150ml	5.03	59p
Napisan	12 x 1000g	9.55	£1.09
Right Guard Double Protection	12 x 134ml	5.98	69p
Wella Conditioners	12 x 40ml	2.53	29½p
Wilkinson Bonded Blades	25 x 5's	9.76	54p
Vaseline Petroleum Jelly No. 2	12 x 115ml	3.74	45p
Norsca Foam Bath	12 x 300ml	3.71	45p
Imperial Leather Soap (Ivory)	36 x Bath (Twin Pack)	10.10	39p
Allurell Hairspray	12 x 135g	6.13	75p

Subject to availability until 30th September \*including VAT where relevant

**Free Display Material: eye-catching, customer catching.**

**GET THE INDEPENDENT  
STORY FROM SANGERS!**

**APOCAIRE**  
A BETTER WAY TO BUY

To: Sales Department, Sangers Ltd., Cinema House,  
225 Oxford Street, London, W.1.

I am an independent chemist. Please send me full details  
of the Apocaire service (including free display material  
information).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Business name \_\_\_\_\_

Business address \_\_\_\_\_



**Miss Constance Tibbs**, a member for almost 24 years of the senior staff of the National Pharmaceutical Association's information department, has retired. Miss Tibbs held a dual responsibility as officer in charge of the locums department and information officer to the NPA group. Miss Tibbs joined the NPA information department in 1956, after extensive experience in retail and hospital pharmacy. This included a three-year apprenticeship at Body's in Southend-on-Sea, training at Bangor University and dispensing posts with Messrs Mills and Mills of Bath. She was also involved with dispensing and information work for seven years at St George's Hospital, London. Since taking over the locums department, Miss Tibbs has quadrupled the number of pharmacists on the NPA's locums register. Miss Tibbs is moving to Bungay in Suffolk to enjoy her retirement and indulge in her countryside and birdwatching interests.

**Mr Norman Buckley, MPS**, has retired after 20 years as proprietor of Hall's Chemist, Battersea. He and his wife were recently presented with a silver rose bowl, together with gifts and cards from past and present members of their staff.

**Mr Hazen L. Richardson**, president of the pharmaceutical division of the Warner-Lambert company of Morris Plains, New Jersey, USA, has been appointed to serve as a public member on the board of directors of the American Society of Hospital Pharmacists Research and Education Foundation Inc.

## News in brief

□ The index of retail prices for July was 229.1 (January 1974 = 100) which represents an increase of 4.3% on June and of 15.0% on July 1978. Information from the Department of Employment indicates that of this 4.3% increase, 3.1% was due to the June budget increases in VAT, tobacco and petrol duties and NHS prescription charges.

□ The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee reminds contractors that the only bandages that may be supplied on form FP10 are those included in Part VI of the Drug Tariff.

Molastic pressure bandage (Molinier) is not included in the Drug Tariff and the Prescription Pricing Authority is unable to certify payment for this bandage when ordered on FP10.

□ Under the Companies Act 1976 all limited liability companies must notify the registrar of companies of an accounting reference date for the preparation of their annual accounts. The period during which this notification can be given expires on September 30. Any company which has not established a date by then will be given March 31 unless it approaches the registrar subsequently for a different date under more stringent provisions.

by Xrayser

## Efficiency

For several years my father ran a small suburban shop. Nominally a grocer, it was in fact a general store which provided, in competition with two similar shops, an extensive range of goods and services. Buckets, mops, bushes, polish, paints, seeds, food-stuff, fresh, dried and canned, bread, cakes, pies, bacon, ham . . . the list seems without end.

The thing that impressed me most, however, was the choice within any one field. In tinned foods, peaches for example, I remember counting about a dozen different sorts from a 9d tin to a magnificent imported 7s 6d can. Neither our shop nor the other two exist today. Merely empty facades remain—put out of business by the temporary glamour and prices of supermarket chains which are certainly efficient. But Sainsbury's only offer two varieties of tinned peaches, their own (which doesn't suit *my* palate) and one other brand at full price. I think we have swapped choice, service, and local convenience for a price cut on the top twenty food products.

But the basis on which the prosperity of these old-fashioned stores were built, was the wholesaler, who severally backed up the retailer with deliveries three or four times a week so that larger stocks did not have to be held. While they maintained competitive prices there was no attempt then to coerce buyers with substantial discounts. We all know what happened. I understand that in the grocery field there are now only three group wholesalers surviving.

Because of what happened in grocery I believe it inevitable that there will be a reduction in the number of our wholesalers—and in the service and the range of goods they will be able to offer once the loss of some 10 per cent of their profit margin is felt.

## A challenge

Yet today I had a letter, not for publication, from the manager of a well-known pharmaceutical company challenging me, very nicely, to produce evidence that we are or will be getting, a less good service as a result of the present discount fight, and stating that in no way does he see it in his own company or his competitors. I am not trying to duck an uncomfortable question but because I am very fully occupied working my business I cannot prove my assertion. The number of deliveries, excessive anyway, are still being maintained; ethical supplies are OK, but in OTC goods I believe there is a significant weeding of range, both from my nearest local supplier and particularly from my "group" wholesaler whose telephone girls seem often to say "discontinued" even when items are in the C&D Price List and are available elsewhere.

However, the letter goes on to say that if a wholesaler can attract a higher level of business from an account instead of being second- or third-string supplier, he may be able to actually improve service from the extra profit at 5 per cent on say £4,000 instead of 15 per cent at £400. Perhaps so, but does not this mean that the retailer is merely changing horses? To my mind it overlooks the fact that there is only a certain amount of business to give. The successful wholesaler will be the one who can gather the most "tied" accounts. How long do the unsuccessful last? Frankly I think it was government under-funding and the desperate need for better cash flow on profit which drove pharmacist contractors to the discounters, not the discounts.

Finally, the writer says that he is sceptical that the DHSS will attempt to claw back the discounts at present being given, because he feels "in his subtle way" that there would be no logic in taking away the discount which private contractors may obtain when Boots have enjoyed that discount for years while being paid on a straight trade price. A sore point with us all. I would like to agree with him . . . except that in the panel's interim report it said specifically that attention will be paid to discounts and the effect they have directly on our NHS income.

Efficiency, I fear, has not come to mean getting the most for the least. It is a god worshipped widely but without much advantage. For as with all gods, the enigma is to know what it means.



The country's best selling denture fixative is Super Wernet's.

And it's going to stay the leading brand, if our latest sales figures are anything to go by.

They've soared up by an impressive 43%.

What's just as impressive is the fact that Super Wernet's has amazingly loyal users, who're reluctant to change to anything else.

And now we're making sure we

reach all those other denture wearers who don't use a fixative, with two major bursts of press advertising.

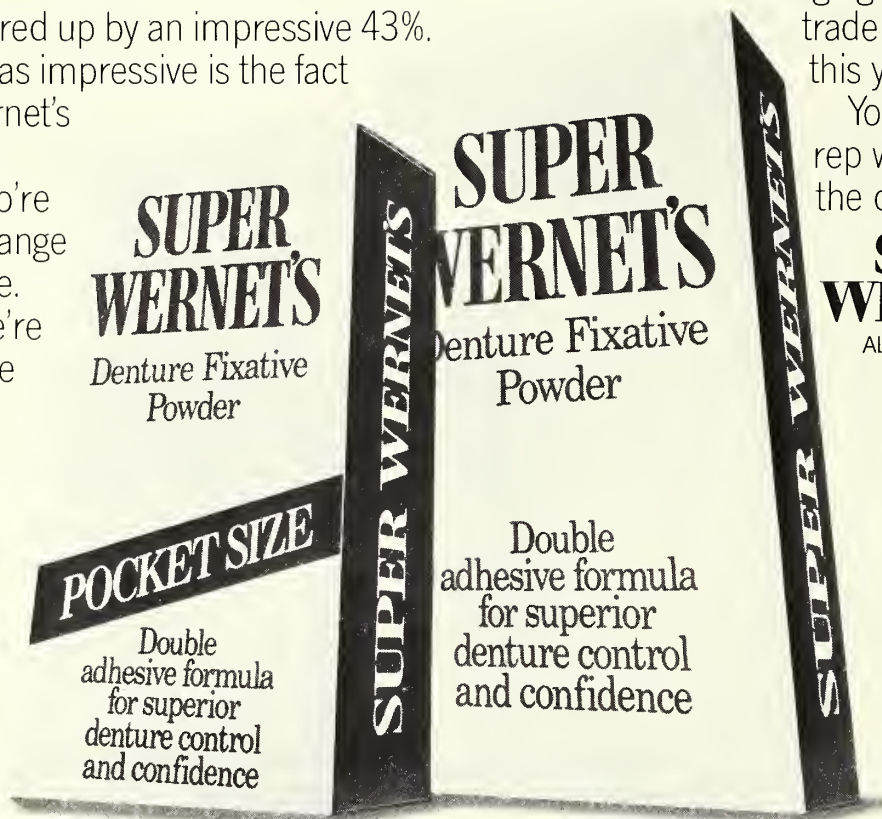
So be prepared for the demand.

We'll also be arranging a very generous trade bonus for later this year.

Your Stafford-Miller rep will give you the details.

**SUPER WERNET'S**

ALL THE CONFIDENCE YOU NEED.



# LEADERS

# NEVER

# LOSE THEIR

# GRIP.



# COUNTERPOINTS

## Bowater-Scott offer four legged Scotties

A peculiarly appropriate offer is being featured by Bowater-Scott on all Scotties tissue packs from the beginning of this month. It is a cuddly, black Scottie dog toy available at a reduced price (£2.99) and two proofs of purchase.

Each Scotties pack, including Tri-ply, is flashed with a picture of the toy on the tear out oval to draw consumers' attention to the offer. It is hoped that the promotion will strengthen consumer awareness of the brand across the full range. It is also said to highlight the softness quality of the tissues themselves. At the same time the offer provides imaginative scope for effective, eye-catching displays in the early autumn, a time when the sale of tissues traditionally starts to "take off" again, says the company. *Bowater-Scott Corporation Ltd, Bowater-Scott House, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 1UR.*

## Almay update

Almay tell us that after several years spent perfecting the art of natural look make-up, the elegant, sophisticated autumn fashion clothes will force women to think afresh, "with a return to classical cuts for clothes, important changes are needed in make-up to complement the new styles." The intensity of colour used is one important facet of this and with dramatic deep reds and red/browns making a come-back for lips and nails, the need to balance these means that cheek colour will become an essential item in the make-up bag. For too long blusher has been regarded as an optional extra and only recently has its use become more widespread. Recognising this and the consequent need for a wide choice of blushers, Almay is relaunching the dewy blusher and rich creme blush ranges to provide a full selection along with fresh blush powder blusher which was introduced this summer.

Dewy blusher (£2.75) is a combination of powder and cream for easy application. It has been repackaged into a black rectangular mirrored compact complete with its own brush. One shade has been retained and three new ones added to give a range of four; cinnamon, cranberry, nutmeg and rosé.

Rich creme blush (£1.70) is a more translucent formulation than classic cream blushers and is said to be suitable for all skin types. Packaged in a black case with a see-through lid, like dewy blusher one shade has been retained and three new ones added to give a range of four; peach brandy, woodland rose, chocolate mousse and peach delight.

Eyes are expected to be much darker



with the neutrals—greys, dusky blues, gingers and rusts coming to the fore. But real emphasis, say Almay, will be on lip and nail colour with deeper reds and red/browns toned to complement the warm earthy fashion shades. Keeping in line with this change in direction, Almay are introducing autumnal shades to three of their colour ranges.

Two new vibrant shades of colour moist pearl lipstick (£1.20) are being introduced; holly berry and ginger nut.

Rich Spice, rich creme frosted nail enamel (£1.20), is colour co-ordinated with a matching lipstick already available in the rich creme frosted lipstick range. The rich lash mascara (£1.95, refills £1.30) range is being extended to include a new shade—blueberry—a soft dusky blue.

Almay is to introduce a range of eye shadow colour kits (£2.40). Over the past 18 months, say Almay, they have concentrated on increasing the fashion appeal of their hypo-allergenic colour cosmetics and, following the launch of colour rich eye shadows and additions to the shadow n'light range, the time seemed ripe to offer multiple combinations of some of these shades. There are four different combinations with three shadows in each kit: Skylights comprises contrasting shades of blue and grey; forestlights—green with a creamy highlighter; wood-tones—autumnal brown hues, and night-shades—contrasts of grey and pink. *Almay-Hypo-Allergenic Cosmetics, PO Box 17, 225 Bath Road, Slough SL1 4AU.*

## Predictor campaign

The new advertising campaign for the Predictor home pregnancy testing kit breaks on October 1 and will feature colour advertisements in leading women's consumer magazines as well as tube cards in London's underground trains. Also, the existing cinema commercial will be shown at selected cinemas across the country. *Chefaro Proprietaries, Crown House, London Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 5D2.*

## Forty lines from Unichem

Over forty discounted lines are being offered to Unichem members from September 12-29. These range from slimming tablets to liniment, to ensure a healthy start for the coming autumn months, says the company. Items on offer are: Alberto Balsam shampoo; Allurell hairspray; Aspro regular; Aspro Clear; Bemax regular; Bemax Crunchy; Bran Slim tablets; Brut 33 creme shave and hair control; Cuticura soap; Fastidia mini-pads; Fenjal creme bath; Gold Spot; Hiltone Shaders and Toners; Infa-Care baby bath; Johnson's baby powder; Johnson's baby cream; Johnson's baby bath; Johnson's Carefree Panty Shields; Johnson's dental floss; Kotex Sylphs; Maws Simpla tablets; Milgard; Milton crystals; Milumil baby milk; Milupa infant foods; Night Nurse; Nulon; Pear's shampoo; Potters Catarrh Pastilles; Pure Silvikrin; Radian 'B' liniment; Sucron; Suleo shampoo; Sure aerosol and Sure roll-on, and Vykmin capsules.

From September 3-17 Unichem is offering its shareholding members the following eight products at discounted prices: Brut 33 splash-on lotion; Colgate dental cream; Johnson's baby lotion; Johnson's cotton buds; Lemsip; Dr White's Panty Pads; Radox herbal bath, and Wilkinson Sword double edge blades. *Unichem Ltd, Crown House, Morden, Surrey.*

## Pills from Ex-lax

Ex-lax have introduced their new sugar-coated laxative pill (8, £0.26; 30, £0.58). Research carried out by Ex-lax showed that many sufferers prefer to take laxatives in the form of pills. The new Ex-lax pills contain the same ingredients as Ex-lax chocolate.

A national advertising campaign for the pills breaks in mid-September in all national newspapers and selected women's magazines. *Ex-lax Ltd, Fishponds Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG11 2QD.*





# COUNTERPOINTS

## Free offers from J&J during September

From September 3, Johnson & Johnson are offering consumers a free towelling Christy face mitt. Special packs of Johnson's baby powder will carry a waistband marked "Free Christy face mitt". The mitt (worth £0.65), comes in two colours, sugar pink and spice brown, and consumers will be able to get one by returning two waistbands from any of the three sizes, together with 10p towards postage.

In addition, a consumer offer of two hand towels and one bath towel (worth £16) from Christy's majestic range, will be featured on all packs for £10. The towels will be in the same choice of colours as the mitts. To support this promotion at point-of-sale, there are dump bin headboards and shelf strips.

During September, the company are also offering consumers a liquid crystal baby bath temperature tester free. Special packs of Johnson's baby bath will carry a collar marked "Free Johnson's baby bath temperature tester". Consumers will be able to get one by returning two collars together with one bottle cap from a 285ml Johnson's baby bath.

The product is being supported by an



advertising and promotional budget of £130,000. During October, November and December, advertisements will appear in *Mother, Mother & Baby*, *Family Circle* and *Living*. Two of the baby annuals will also carry ads along with two professional publications, *Health Visitor*, and *Midwife*, *Health Visitor & Community Nurse*. Johnson & Johnson Ltd, Slough, Berks SL1 4EA.

## Lancetti fragrance

Contec Marketing Ltd have been appointed the distributors in the UK and Eire for the new perfume created by Pino Lancetti, the painter and couturier of Rome.

The perfume, called Lancetti, comprises extracts of narcissus, rose and jasmine within a background of musk, moss and cyste and enhanced by the warmth of ylang, patchouli, vetiver and sandalwood. The fragrance is described as fresh, young and green "full of vitality and persistence".

Lancetti will be available as an eau de toilette (flacon 50ml £6.40, 100ml £10.15, or spray 25ml £4.55, 50ml £7.75 and 100ml £11.20), an eau de toilette concentré (50ml £9.35, 100ml £11.75, or spray 25ml £5.90, 50ml £10.15, 100ml £13.85) or as an extrait (7ml £11.25, 14ml £17, 28ml £27) and as a soap (box of three £5.90). Contec Marketing Ltd, Equity & Law House, 102 Queens Road, Brighton BN1 3XX.

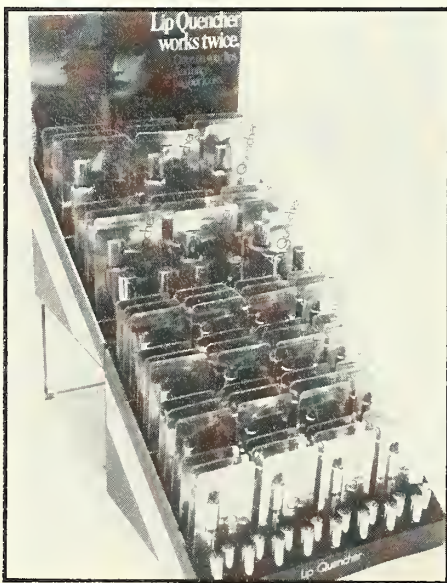
## Hansen duo

Sally Hansen's latest promotion is the Duo Pack which combines Hard as Nails with Nylon and Dry Fast. From October until Christmas, the Duo Pack will be available from Sally Hansen stockists for £0.99, a saving of 55p when compared

to the normal recommended prices.

From October until Christmas, Long 'N' Strong will be available at the special price of £1.02 (normally £1.12). Sally Hansen Ltd, Smith & Nephew Cosmetics, Hook Rise South, Surbiton, Surrey.

Shown below is the new merchandiser for Lip Quencher lipsticks from A. H. Robins. The header board reflects the new advertising campaign for the product which is currently appearing in such magazines as *Company* and *Vogue*



## Kleenex Cashmaker promotion

Kimberly-Clark's latest Kleenex for Men facial tissue on-pack promotion—Cashmaker, in which consumers are offered up to 75p free cash in exchange for proof-of-purchase tear out panels—will run until the end of the year.

The Cashmaker promotion—fifth in a series of on-pack promotions implemented by Kimberly-Clark over an 18 month period—demonstrates the company's determination to "offer the trade highly effective promotions aimed at increasing facial tissue turnover in-store."

The Cashmaker promotion offers consumers 25p "free cash" in exchange for tear-out panels from three boxes, or 50p for panels from six boxes, or 75p for panels from eight boxes, and is equivalent to eight pence off each box purchased (applications go Freepost) which represents a saving of at least 20 per cent. Kimberley-Clark Ltd, Larkfield, Maidstone, Kent.

## Pifco three

Pifco have introduced the Broxobrush battery-operated toothbrush (£14.85) which is housed in an integral wall-mounted cabinet. Four 1.5 volt alkaline batteries are said to provide enough power for efficient brushing for six or seven months by a family of four.

The brushing angle can be varied from 15° to 40° by adjusting a control knob and spare brushes with a choice of hard or normal bristles are also available.

Pifco's new battery-operated nailcare kit (£8.15) has five push-fit attachments which are slipped into the front of the power handle—a brush for cleaning, a coarse emery stone for basic shaping, a fine emery stone for final shaping, a chamois-like buffer for polishing and a callous remover for pedicure. A pressure sensitive switch allows for either instant maximum control or continuous operation. The kit comes in a washable travel case.

Another new introduction is the hot styling brush (£7.95) for curling or straightening dry hair. The brush is a universal voltage, single heat, lightweight, hand-held electric styler/curler with PTC heating element and has eight rows of heat-resistant plastic bristles.

The Broxobrush will be advertised in family interest magazines during November and December, and preventive dentistry leaflets are available from the company. The nailcare kit will be advertised with the facial brush in "teens and twenties" magazines from autumn through to Christmas. This campaign will also feature the styling brush. Pifco Ltd, Failsworth, Manchester.



# Unit dose cold relief from Owbridges

A cold relief product in a unit dose system is about to be launched by Chefaro Proprietaries. Owbridges cold control (6 x 20ml, £1.39) contains, in each 20ml: paracetamol 500mg, ammonium chloride 300mg and phenylpropanolamine hydrochloride 25mg.

Each 20ml is packed in a plastic vial and a top is snapped off to take the pre-measured dose. The recommended dose for adults in 20ml two or three times daily with at least a few hours interval between doses; for children 10-15 years, the dose is 20ml not more than twice daily. Owbridges cold control is being launched with a trade bonus and there will be a £½ million



national television advertising campaign to support the product throughout the winter. *Chefaro Proprietaries Ltd, Crown House, London Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 5DZ.*

## Fashionable Tender Touch

Smith & Nephew are again breaking new ground in cotton wool promotions for the Tender Touch range with a new fashion competition. Following the successful on-pack nursery mobile offer, (16,000 redemptions to date) the competition is supported by an advertising campaign in the women's Press. Starting in September, advertisements will appear in *Woman's Realm*, *She*, *Honey*, *Living*, *Mother* and *Good Housekeeping*.

To win the £1,000 prize—a fashion wardrobe to be chosen at the Oxford Street Peter Robinson—the entrant must correctly date six fashion silhouettes and complete a tiebreaker. Each entry must be accompanied by an empty pack from any product in the Tender Touch range. Fifty runners-up will each receive a £10 voucher. The competition will run from September to December 31.

A trade competition, open to Tender Touch stockists, will run simultaneously with the consumer one and has the same closing date. First prize is a choice from these items—£150 cash, a Viking 6570 sewing machine, or a Minett dishwasher. Entry details and point of sale material for this promotion, shelf edgers and dump bin headboard are available from Smith & Nephew representatives. *Smith & Nephew Ltd, Bessemer Road, Welwyn Garden City, Herts.*

## Wella on radio

Throughout September, October and November Wella will be featuring their range of herbal, lemon and almond shampoos in a nationwide campaign on Radio Luxembourg. Especially aimed at women in the 15-34 age group, there are four individual commercials—one for each type, plus another indicating why Wella shampoos are so kind and gentle.

All of the thirty-second commercials promote the effectiveness and gentleness of Wella shampoos and lay special emphasis on the manageability of the hair after using a quality shampoo. The spots finish with the sign-off message—“Wella your hair today because tonight . . . who knows! Wella—We know about hair.” *Wella Great Britain Ltd, Wella Road, Basingstoke, Hants.*

## Christmas displays

Spearhead now have available a new range of Christmas and winter display items. First shown at Shopex in June, the wide variety of Santas, Christmas trees, snowflakes etc, are available in free-standing and cling-film materials. The company supplies a colour brochure which shows several ways to dress Christmas windows from £5. *Spearhead Promotion & Display Ltd, 34 Carey Street, Reading*

## Apocaire offers

Apocaire offers for September include Allurell hairspray, Cow & Gate baby meals, Lemon Delph cleansing milk and skin freshener, Farley's rusks, Handy Andies, Imperial Leather soap, Johnsons baby lotion, Lil-lets, Napisan, Norsca, Right Guard double protection, Signal, Supersoft shampoo and hairspray, Vaseline petroleum jelly, Wella conditioners and Wilkinson bonded razor blades.

Sangers Ltd have been appointed the wholesale distributor for the Rusco range of packed goods. J. Mason, ethical merchandise manager for Sangers commented: “The Rusco range is comprehensive, well presented and will offer Sangers customers excellent value”. To introduce the range, during September there will be a 10 per cent discount off the normal trade price for 30 pack orders. *Sangers Ltd, Cinema House 225 Oxford Street, London W1R 1AE.*

## Advertising breaks for Vespré

The first major advertising for Vespré, Johnson & Johnson's newest sanpro product, breaks at the beginning of September. J&J plans to spend a substantial part of its £1m marketing budget for the first year in the next four months, concentrating on major women's weekly and monthly publications.

“We shall be using a radically different approach to advertising sanpro products,” says Chris Melbourne, business development manager responsible for Vespré. “It's going to be hardhitting and controversial. A lot of sanpro advertising tends to be stereotyped and more concerned with the life styles of the user. Ours will be bold and dramatic, using mainly double page spreads right at the beginning of magazines to emphasise how big a breakthrough Vespré represents in the sanitary towel market. In a side by side comparison, our ads will demonstrate just what an advance Vespré offers: fully effective protection at only one-third of the thickness of traditional towels.”

The campaign will use a combination of double page spreads, followed immediately by single page ads in the same magazine offering a “5p off” coupon. In-store leaflets are also being used extensively at point of sale. *Johnson & Johnson Ltd, Slough, Berks SL1 4EA.*

## Vichy hand cream launch delayed

The new hand cream from Vichy (*C&D*, August 18, p246) will not be available for sale until later this month or early October. *Vichy (UK) Ltd, 1 Hay Hill, London W1X 7HR.*

## ON TV NEXT WEEK

Ln—London; M—Midlands; Lc—Lancashire; Y—Yorkshire; Sc—Scotland; WW—Wales and West; So—South; NE—North-east; A—Anglia; U—Ulster; We—Westward; B—Border; G—Grampian; E—Eireann; CI—Channel Island.

**Alka Seltzer:** All areas

**Anadin:** All areas

**Anne French:** E

**Babettes:** All areas

**Bisodol:** Lc, So

**Crest:** M, Y, NE, A

**Farley's rusks:** All except E

**Head & Shoulders:** All except E, CI

**Heinz baby foods:** M, Lc, Y, NE, A

**Immac:** E

**Johnson's baby oil:** WW, So, NE, A, We

**Johnson's baby powder:** Sc, G

**Wondra:** Y, NE

**Zest:** M, Lc, Sc, B



## Ketotifen in Asthma prophylaxis

The anti-anaphylactic activity of ketotifen appears to be mostly due to its inhibition of the release of histamine. The drug also exerts a sustained inhibitory effect on histamine receptors plus acting as a selective mast cell stabiliser.

### ZADITEN capsules

**Manufacturer** Sandoz Products Ltd, PO Box Horsforth No 4, Calverley Lane, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 4RP

**Description** White, opaque, oblong capsules each containing 1.38 mg ketotifen hydrogen fumarate equivalent to 1 mg ketotifen base

**Indication** Prophylactic treatment of bronchial asthma. Activity takes several weeks to become fully established

**Contraindications** Not to be given concomitantly with oral antidiabetic agents, as a reversible fall in the thrombocyte count has been observed in a few cases. Not to be used in pregnancy or during breast feeding.

**Dosage** Adults one capsule twice daily with food. May be increased to two capsules twice daily. Zaditen is currently being evaluated in childhood asthma

**Precautions** Anti-asthmatic drugs already in use should not be withdrawn abruptly when long term treatment with Zaditen is begun. During first few days reactions may be impaired and patient should be advised to take care when driving or operating machinery and to avoid alcohol. Zaditen may potentiate effects of sedatives, hypnotics, antihistamines and alcohol

**Side effects** Sedation, dry mouth and slight dizziness may occur at the beginning of treatment

**Storage** In cool dry place

**Packs** 60 capsules (£7.20 trade)

**Supply restrictions** Prescription Only

**Issued** September 3, 1979

### DIA-TUSS syrup

**Manufacturer** Rona Laboratories Ltd, Cadwell Lane, Hitchin, Herts SG4 0SF

**Description** Clear orange-coloured syrup containing pholcodine 10mg per 5ml in a sugar-free basis. Carbohydrate content of each 5ml is 4.2g providing about 16 calories

**Indications** Relief of unproductive cough particularly in diabetic patients and those requiring a sugar-free diet

**Dosage** Adults and children over 12 years—one 5ml spoonful four times daily; children over 2 years—2.5ml four times daily

**Side effects** Nausea and drowsiness may occur

**Storage** In cool place. Shelf-life of two years

**Dispensing** diluent Non-crystallising

sorbitol solution

**Packs** 500ml (£3 trade)

**Supply restrictions** Pharmacy Only

**Issued** September 1979

## CASTOR OIL MINIMS

**Manufacturer** Smith & Nephew Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Bessemer Road, Welwyn Garden City, Herts

**Description** Clear, almost colourless or slightly yellow viscous sterile eye drops

**Indications** As a lubricant and emollient

**Method of use** One or two drops as required

**Precautions** The Minims unit to be used only once

**Storage** In cool place, not exposed to strong light

**Packs** 20 units (£2.85 trade)

**Supply restrictions** Pharmacy Only

**Issued** September 3, 1979

## Tryptizol goes to Thomas Morson

Tryptizol is to be transferred from Merck Sharp & Dohme Ltd to its division, Thomas Morson Pharmaceuticals from September 1979. This is in order to provide more comprehensive information services on all aspects of its use. Pack sizes, tablet codes and the range of tablet, capsule, syrup and injectable formulations will remain the same. *Thomas Morson Pharmaceuticals, Hertford Road, Hoddesdon, Herts EN11 9BU.*

## Co-Betaloc dosage

Astra have received Department of Health approval for alteration in the dosage recommendations for Co-Betaloc, so that the drug can now be given once daily. The dosage recommendations now read: Dosage and administration: This will depend on patient response. Usually 1-3 tablets per day given as a single or divided dose. *Astra Chemicals Ltd, PO Box 117, King George's Avenue, Watford, Herts WD1 7QR.*

## Norgine pack changes

Norgine have made the following pack alterations to their range of products. The 100g pack of Normacol standard is discontinued and a 200g pack (£1.62) introduced. The 100g packs of Normacol special and antispasmodic are also discontinued. The pack of 12 Tampovagan N pessaries has been replaced by a pack

of 10 as has the 12 pack of Tampovagan stilboestrol and lactic acid pessaries. The price of these new packs is the same as the old. *Norgine Ltd, 59 High Holborn, London WC1 6EB.*

## Kirby gels

The following gels are now available from Kirby Pharmaceuticals: sterile lignocaine gel with chlorhexidine (15ml, £0.35 trade); sterile lignocaine gel without chlorhexidine (15ml, £0.30 trade); and sterile lubricating gel (42g, £0.39 trade). The first two are Prescription Only, the third Pharmacy Only. *Kirby Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Mildenhall, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP28 7AX.*

## Enzypharm products withdrawn

The following products have been withdrawn for sale in the UK by Rona Laboratories: Interacton, Coliacron, Oculucidon and Rheumajecta. However supplies can be obtained on a named patient basis direct from Enzypharm Biochemicals Ltd, PO Box 69, Harrogate, North Yorkshire The only Enzypharm product remaining on the general market will be Vasolastine. *Rona Laboratories Ltd, Cadwell Lane, Hitchin, Herts.*

## Mestinon in 200s

Mestinon tablets 60mg are now packed as 200 (£4.94 trade) instead of 150. *Roche Products Ltd, Broadwater Road, Welwyn Garden City, Herts.*

## More spermicide in Orthoforms

The content of the spermicide nonoxynol-9 in Orthoforms contraceptive has been increased from 2 per cent to 5 per cent. Benzethonium chloride 0.05 per cent has also been deleted and the pessaries are now white. Ortho Pharmaceuticals say that stocks should be rotated in the usual way as they will not accept for credit stocks of the earlier formulation Orthoforms. *Ortho Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Saunderton, High Wycombe, Bucks.*

## Integrin white

Future supplies of Integrin tablets will be white, say *Winthrop Laboratories, Winthrop House, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 4PH.*





## Why you should go for a slim waistline.

This is the shape of feeding bottle sales. The highly identifiable shape of a Freflo polycarbonate bottle.

This year we're promoting bottles in a bigger way than ever before with colour pages, in all the mother and baby magazines.

The shape focuses attention on the many important features that set Freflo apart.

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# NPA hears of problems on tax deductions for locums

A draft note regarding PAYE and National Insurance regulations for locums and casual staff is being prepared by the National Pharmaceutical Association for inclusion in *Pink Supplement*. This was decided after discussion at the July meeting of NPA Board of Management when it was also decided to refer the general question to the Legislation and Tax Committee of the National Chamber of Trade.

Verbal reports were given by Mr Lewis Priest and Mr K. G. Cluer (finance officer) on the problems a member had encountered after a visit from tax officials who discovered that he had not deducted income tax and national insurance from his locums and cleaner although the member thought the locums were self-employed and the cleaner earned less than the minimum amount from which deductions were required. The member had not notified the Inland Revenue of the cleaner's employment with him and was held responsible for income tax under-deducted from her wages.

**NHS charges receipt form:** Because of numerous reports from members experiencing difficulty in obtaining the new NHS prescription charges receipt forms it was decided to publicise in the Press that the old forms could be used after suitable amendment.

## Script charge complaint

**Prescription charge increase:** It was noted that Mr J. Wright had written to the Secretary of State in the following terms: "I am writing on behalf of our nine thousand retail pharmacist members through the United Kingdom about the Government's decision to increase National Health Service prescription levies in the middle of a month, and the lack of publicity given to the date chosen.

"We can see no reason whatever why the increases should not have been effected on 1st July or 1st August. The Government's insistence on 16th July and its refusal to change this date will result in considerable inconvenience to pharmacists and will give rise to wholly unnecessary extra work and record-keeping. Furthermore, the Chancellor's failure to announce the date of the increases in his budget statement has led to confusion and uncertainty in the minds of pharmacists and patients. By the time we were able to ascertain the date ourselves—your Department's Press office was also in ignorance for some time—and pass the information on to our members several of them had already collected the higher charges. They were subsequently put to the considerable inconvenience of tracing the patients concerned and making refunds to them.

"Your Party's manifesto stressed the desirability of reducing bureaucracy and helping smaller and independent busi-

nesses. It is still not too late, we submit, for you to reconsider the date on which the levies will go up and we hope that you will do so. I am sending a copy of this letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and to Mr David Mitchell for their information."

**Product liability:** A reply had been received from the Department of Health to the Association's submission that the proposed system of strict liability for defective medicines could only be satisfactorily introduced by means of a state administered central compensation fund. The letter from the Department stated that it had not ruled out the possibility of setting up such a fund. The NPA would be invited to participate in further discussions with the Departments of Health and Trade.

## Cow and Gate discounts

**Cow & Gate:** Following further exchanges of correspondence with Cow & Gate about their revised terms and conditions of sale, to which the Association had raised a number of objections, it was agreed that NPA and Cow & Gate representatives should meet to discuss the matter further. An opportunity would also be taken at that meeting of raising objections from members about Cow & Gate's reductions in quantity discounts which in some cases was resulting in wholesalers applying surcharges for distributing the products concerned. One example was a reduction from 11 per cent to 3 per cent on Premium Milk, another was that the direct price for baby meals at the 50-dozen rate was higher than the current wholesale price for a single dozen. Macarthy's were alleged to be charging about 3p per packet over the recommended wholesale price for both these products "to avoid making a loss on small orders."

**Curity Snugglers—Profit Margin:** It was agreed to pursue the recent correspondence with Colgate Palmolive about low profit margins on Curity Snugglers because it appeared that wholesalers were being given a bigger margin than the retailer.

**Controlled Drugs:** A member would be told that the NPA could see no objection to his plan to display the following window notice: "We do not stock Controlled Drugs. Our arrangement is as follows:- Prescriptions brought in At 9 am to 9.30 am will be dispensed by 12 noon

At 11 am to 11.30 am will be dispensed by 4 pm

At 4 pm to 5.30 pm will be dispensed by 10 am next morning."

The member's pharmacy was in an area where there had been frequent thefts from security cabinets and he would be reminded that whenever he was not personally in charge of Controlled Drugs

in his pharmacy they should be locked away in his regulation cabinet.

**Dexedrine tablets:** Smith Kline & French would be asked to comment on a report from a member about short measure in original packs of Dexedrine, which, as a Controlled Drug, could not be returned for replacement without legal problems.

**VAT—"on account" payments:** There was no support for a suggestion from a member of the Board that Customs & Excise be asked to introduce a scheme whereby traders' payments or repayments could be made by means of a fixed monthly (or quarterly) amount calculated on the previous twelve months' figures. Gas and electricity payments were often calculated in this way and the trader would only need to submit an annual return, following which any credit or debit due would be paid.

**Training seminars:** The Business Services Committee noted details of nine ostomy courses which had been organised in London and six at venues outside the capital. A truss fitting seminar and a security seminar had been arranged at St Albans for January 10 and February 7 respectively.

**Technician Education Council:** The Board agreed with the revised job specification for pharmacy technicians submitted by the Technician Education Council.

**VAT stationery:** The Business Services Committee accepted a suggestion from a member that the entry lines on the NPA VAT input sheets should be individually numbered when next this stationery was reprinted.

**Veterinary window stickers:** The Committee agreed to the preparation of suitable window stickers to inform members of the public that agricultural, veterinary and pet-care products would in future be available from retail pharmacies.

Among other matters discussed by the Board of Management were use of "chemist" in advertising, increased Post Office tariffs, consultation with consumers following the Clothier Report, remuneration panel, Unichem rebates, Monopolies Commission inquiry into full-line forcing and the NPA staff training course.

## New towns to sell off assets

Property sales worth about £140m are to be negotiated by the 21 new towns in England, following instructions from the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Michael Heseltine.

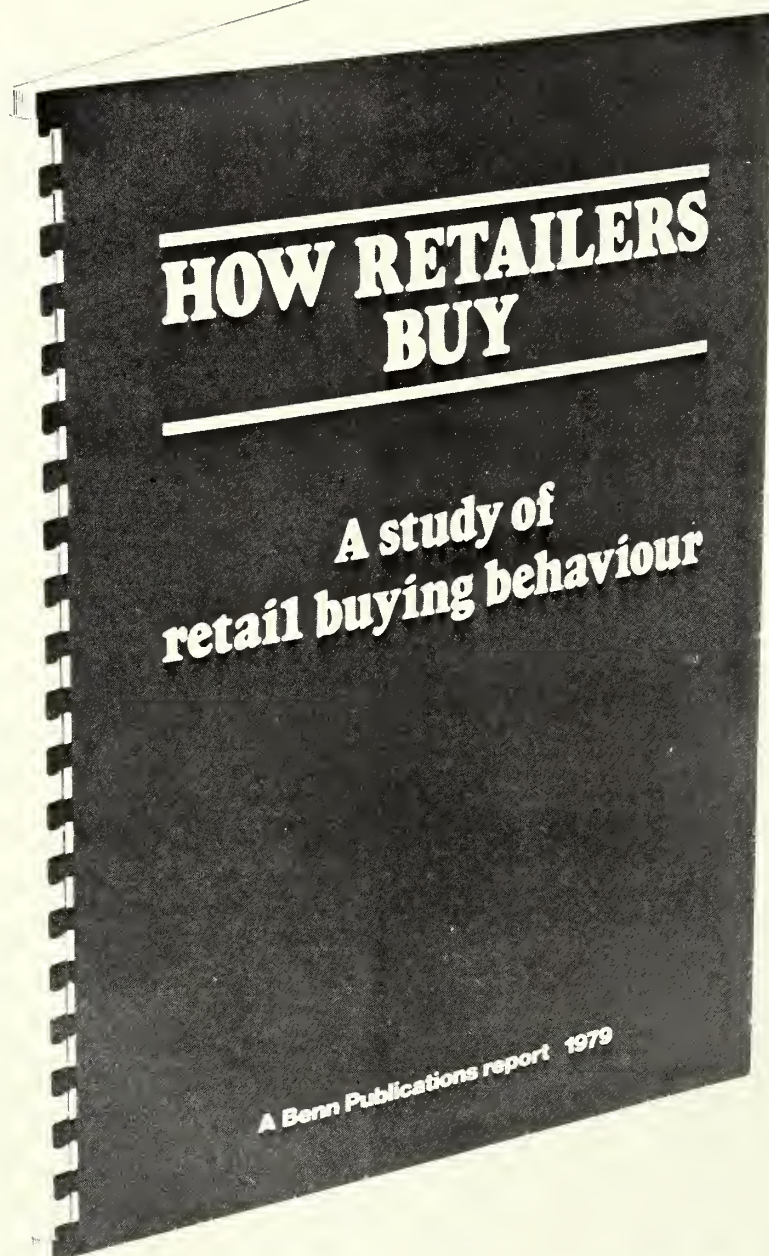
All the sales must be made before next April and amount to nearly a fifth of the towns' revenue-producing assets.

The move is in accordance with the Government's policy to reduce the public sector borrowing requirement.

Healey and Baker, the chartered surveyors appointed to advise Mr Heseltine on the sales, will have the task of preventing the institutions from picking up properties too cheaply.



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# ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS A PAIN IN THE NECK?

by Dr Li Wan Po, BPharm, MPS, department of pharmacy, Aston University

Counter stimulation at the site of pain can be most effective in the relief of musculo-skeletal pain and occasionally helpful when applied to the site of referred pain from visceral pathology (1). It is not surprising therefore that numerous topical analgesic products are available on the market.

Topical analgesics are regarded by many as a more direct method of treatment of superficial pain than oral analgesics. In many respects this is a valid assessment and topical therapy is one of the earliest successes in targetting by drug delivery systems although it was probably more the result of trial and error than rational scientific design. Our knowledge of percutaneous absorption is still rudimentary and in the area of topical analgesics the problem is further complicated by the complexity of pain. In this article an attempt is made to examine some of the conditions which may be amenable to treatment by topical analgesics, the theories put forward to explain their effectiveness and the main agents available.

The conditions for which treatment by topical analgesics is often sought fall into two main groups. The first group includes acute, relatively superficial tissue damage arising from accidents while the second group comprises a range of conditions for which the aetiology is often unclear and are often described as non-articular rheumatism. Many of the conditions in this latter group no doubt involve referred pain. Although the higher standards of nutrition, accommodation and health care have meant that the incidence of conditions characterised by non-specific pain which resolves spontaneously have decreased markedly, they still represent a major problem. As an example, low

back pain which is often considered together with non-articular rheumatism because of its equally obscure aetiology, accounts for an annual loss of 13 million working days. The fact that only about 2 per cent of these patients consult their GPs (2) shows the extent of self treatment which must take place.

Muscular rheumatism, fibrositis and non-articular rheumatism are all terms which are used to define several conditions characterised by pain and stiffness, often of sudden onset and affecting mainly the neck, shoulders, back and gluteal regions. These conditions often resolve spontaneously and may explain why, despite their importance in terms of working days lost, little is known about them. While the exact aetiology is obscure, patients are often able to pin-point predisposing and precipitating factors. Thus terms like "catching a chill" are often used by patients seeking advice from pharmacists. Exposure to cold and damp, particularly when localised to one part of the body, is widely accepted as a cause for acute muscular rheumatism.

## Excessive activity

Pain and stiffness are by common experience known to follow excessive and/or unaccustomed muscular activity. Poor posture and obesity can lead to pain by putting undue pressure on muscles and ligaments. Those who have been unfortunate enough to have experienced a muscular strain are usually aware that the injured area often becomes particularly vulnerable even years after the acute episode. This may be the result of the laying down of scar tissue with consequent loss of elasticity. Muscular pain and tenderness, the "aching all over syndrome" is a well

known accompaniment of acute infections.

Painful tender areas in the muscles and subcutaneous tissues are also known to be associated with various metabolic and endocrine disorders such as hypothyroidism and hypopituitarism. The importance of psychogenic causes in non-articular rheumatism needs no elaboration. The pathology associated with the majority of cases of lumbago, sciatica and brachial neuralgia is thought to involve degenerative changes in the intervertebral disc (3) and probably account for the predominance of the elderly among those affected.

Localised soft tissue rheumatism arising from injury, strains and sprains, are also often treated with topical products. A strain involves a muscle tear and in addition to the muscle fibres, damage can extend to the connective tissues and blood vessels. Strains generally result from force imbalance due to inco-ordination. (4). Partial muscle tear may be more difficult to treat than total muscle tear since blood is often entrapped in the former case and an intramuscular haematoma results. When the muscle envelope is torn, the blood is able to leak out (interstitial haematoma) and often diffuses out to the surface forming a discoloration at some significant distance from the site of the tear and is often described by the patient as "the bruise coming out" (4).

Most joints in the limbs are of the synovial type, that is the bones end with a layer of articular cartilage and the joint itself is encapsulated. The capsule is reinforced in certain sites by ligaments and the inner site of the capsule is lined by a layer of synovial membrane which

*Continued on p326*



# Pains in the neck

Continued from p325

secretes a lubricant. When stress is applied to a joint beyond its normal range of movement, damage to the capsule and/or ligaments leading to swelling and pain results. This damage is called a sprain. Only minor sprains can be adequately treated with topical analgesic products. More serious cases need medical attention to prevent long term damage and in most cases oral analgesics therapy may be best although topical products may give additional symptomatic relief.

## Action of counter-irritants

The posterior horn and the substantia gelatinosa are points of convergence of many incoming fibres of differing diameters from body surface and deep and visceral sources (5). The gate control theory (6) predicts that stimulation of the thick myelinated sensory nerve fibres is able to close the gate to incoming information in the thin myelinated and unmyelinated fibres which subserve pain. The theory however does not explain why thermal stimuli which preferentially affect the thin myelinated and unmyelinated fibres are effective in pain relief. One possibility is that any additional stimuli can compete with pain stimuli since the central nervous system can only deal with a finite amount of information at any point in time (1). Another theory, modality switching, has also been put forward to explain the activity of the counter-irritants. The first transmission neurones in the dorsal horn of the spinal cord are thought capable of switching their activity from pain to muscle monitoring (proprioception) or skin monitoring (exteroception) by suitable stimulation.

The brainstem reticular formation controls excessive nervous activity after sensory input. It is thought possible however that the low-key persistent neural activity associated with chronic neuromuscular pain may be inadequate to trigger the control mechanism. In these circumstances, a sudden burst of intense counter stimulation may help to initiate it.

The afferent nerve impulses from the skin are relayed in the cerebrospinal axis to efferent vasomotor fibres supplying internal organs (7). It can therefore be expected that increased circulation in the dermis resulting from the application of the counter-irritants is accompanied by increased circulation in the deeper integumental structures and in viscera innervated from the same segmental level of the central nervous system. This may therefore partially account for the effectiveness of the counter-irritants although there is little

evidence for the increased blood flow(8). Tissue damage is accompanied by the release of tissue mediators of pain such as bradykinin, prostaglandins and 5 hydroxytryptamine. The improved local circulation produced by the drugs and the muscle relaxation induced by diluting and dispersing these mediators. Ionic imbalance and pH changes are also more rapidly controlled so that pain relief may ensue.

## Percutaneous absorption

The ease with which the active ingredients cross the stratum corneum is important since this step is necessary before the drug can reach the nerve endings and it also controls the drug concentration in the systemic circulation which in turn determines whether



Courtesy of Mentholatum Co Ltd

there is any risk of systemic toxicity following topical application. An appreciation of the factors controlling percutaneous absorption is therefore important in the evaluation of topical counter-irritants.

The thickness of the stratum corneum is obviously important since it represents the main barrier to penetration and can be as much as five orders of magnitude less permeable than the dermis to chemicals (9). It has been shown that there are important differences in the thickness of the layer at different locations on the body. Thus, abdominal stratum corneum is much thinner than on the flexor forearm. Lipophilicity is known to be significant and is often expressed in terms of oil water partition coefficients. For a given weak acid or base, although the absolute partition coefficient for a given solvent pair is a constant, the degree of ionisation of the drug which is determined by the pH, will alter the apparent partition coefficient. The polarity of the drug molecules which can be reflected in the partition coefficients is also important. The molecular size of the molecule will affect the diffusion

coefficient and hence percutaneous absorption.

Promotion of permeation of many drugs by hydration of the skin is well known, the classical example being the increased absorption of topical steroids with occlusive dressings. Some solvent effects on the activity of methyl nicotinate have also been explained in terms of hydration of the stratum corneum (10). Solvents may also promote the absorption of drugs from the skin and a well known example is the effect of dimethyl sulphoxide on drug permeation. The lipid content of the skin will determine its lipophilicity and hence it will also affect absorption rates.

## Active ingredients

*Methyl salicylate* and various other salicylates including glycol salicylate and ethyl salicylate are included in proprietary preparations. Several of these salicylates are readily absorbed percutaneously and indeed studies on their absorption have contributed significantly to our understanding of transdermal absorption. The importance of hydration on the absorption of salicylates has been shown (11). The effect of hydration on the absorption rates will depend on the lipophilicity of the salicylates with the effect being more pronounced with the more hydrophilic molecules. Thus it has been shown that the effect is greater with glycol salicylate than with ethyl salicylate (11). Aspirin is also included in many topical preparations but evidence for its usefulness when applied topically is sparse. There is usually cross-sensitivity between all the salicylates.

*The nicotines* such as methyl-ethyl and hexyl nicotines form another major group of topical counter-irritants which have been studied in some detail. The ease with which erythema, the observed effect, can be followed may explain this. In a couple of studies the effects of the carrier on the activity and release of methyl nicotinate were followed (12, 13). It was found that release from an aqueous solution was faster than from propylene glycol although a more prolonged effect was observed with the slower acting systems.

*Capsicum oleoresin* and its active ingredient, capsaicin are widely used. Although application to the skin causes erythema and burning, to produce pain relief, it is said not to cause vesication. The capsaicin content of capsicum oleoresin is about 10 per cent. It is not surprising therefore that the capsicum oleoresin content is usually much higher than the capsaicin content (up to 2 per cent as opposed to up to 0.2 per cent). The capsaicin derivative nonylic acid vanillylamide is also used for the same purpose although its advantage seems unclear. Products containing the higher concentrations of capsicum oleoresin may stain clothing.

*Camphor* which was originally obtained from the camphor tree is now mainly of synthetic origin. When applied gently it produces a feeling of coolness which makes it a popular



ingredient of topical preparations. Camphorated oil, a 20 per cent solution of camphor in arachis oil, is perhaps the best known camphor containing preparation. The significant number of poisoning cases which have been attributed to the ingestion of this product deserves attention (14-18). Cases of transplacental transfer following the accidental ingestion of camphor-containing products have been reported (19, 20). Although the significance of these in relation to the topical application of camphor is unknown, it seems that it is only wise to withhold such therapy from pregnant women as camphor is known to be absorbed percutaneously (16-18). Quite aside from the potential for teratogenic effects, it is known that camphor is metabolised by hydroxylation and conjugation with glucuronic acid (21) and since these routes of detoxification are limited in the foetus, it is evident that even trace amounts may be highly toxic.

*Heparinoid* and *hyaluronidase* preparations can perhaps also be usefully mentioned here. Both are used for the treatment of contusions, sprains and strains. There is some evidence that the compounds are absorbed percutaneously (22). *Hyaluronidase* depolymerises hyaluronic acid and may help in promoting the dispersal of tissue exudates in swollen areas. This very mode of action however makes it contraindicated whenever there is a likelihood of infection because of the danger of spread.

Other ingredients which are often encountered in OTC analgesic preparations include histamine hydrochloride, cinchocaine, turpentine oil, ammonia solution, acetic acid and salicylamide. Turpentine oil and ammonia solution have counter-irritant properties. Although some of the other agents possess well known pharmacological properties, their effectiveness upon topical application is less well documented.

### Product choice

It is tempting to say that all the products available contain more or less the same ingredients and there is little to choose from besides patient acceptability. Although it is true that the same ingredients are found in many of these preparations, their concentrations are widely different. Methyl salicylate concentrations in the products available in the UK market for example range from less than 1 per cent to 20 per cent. Their irritant potential will therefore be very different. Most of the products are compound preparations and it is therefore useful for the pharmacist to familiarise himself with the products available in terms of active ingredients and their concentrations. This knowledge will be useful when recommending products for patients who claim that one product is "too hot" or that it is too weak. A thorough knowledge of five of the most popular products may be adequate to meet most of the patients' questions in this area. The five products should include a product of high and

one of low irritancy, a greasy and a vanishing product and products with different active ingredients.

### Dosage form considerations

Counter-irritants are formulated into several dosage forms and include ointments, creams, gels, sticks, aerosols and liniments. Adequate attention is often not given to the dosage form when recommending a suitable product. The greasiness of ointments is often overlooked. The temptation to children of liquid formulations with their potential for accidental poisoning should be taken into account when recommending products for patients with young children in the home. Aerosols are expensive but are useful for patients who live alone since application to otherwise inaccessible areas is then possible.



### Irritancy

Most of the ingredients of the counter-irritant preparations are highly irritant so that application to abraded skin and contact with mucous membranes should be avoided. This is particularly important when dealing with odourless formulations which may mask the irritant nature of the products. Some of the esters of salicylic acid and nicotinic acid for example are odourless and yet highly irritant when applied to mucous membranes. If excessive amounts of any of the counter-irritants are accidentally applied, and stinging results, this can be controlled by swabbing with gauze or lint soaked in a vegetable oil.

### Hypersensitivity reactions

Cases of hypersensitivity to menthol (23) and methyl salicylate (24) have been reported and it is probably fair to say that all the ingredients of the products discussed are liable to induce hypersensitivity reactions. The base may some-

times be involved and lanolin is a notorious example although its availability in purer grades has no doubt decreased the incidence of adverse reactions to it. Hypersensitivity to compounds such as stearyl alcohol which are considered to be non allergenic have also been reported (25). It is unfortunate that only very few manufacturers declare the components used for preparing the bases. It is to be hoped that this will change in future since this can only help in enabling the safer use of the products, thereby creating greater confidence in the drug industry. If this is not done voluntarily, there is little doubt that legal requirements will eventually make it compulsory.

### Conclusion

While there is little doubt that topical analgesics and counter-irritants are effective, the limitations and dangers associated with their use are often not fully appreciated. In many of the conditions discussed therapy is probably best coupled with oral preparations. Percutaneous absorption is often not negligible and care must be exercised when recommending products for pregnant women and the very young. The old view that percutaneous application is totally safe because it is external is no longer tenable. Even belladonna plasters have been reported (26) to lead to poisoning following repeated application. Liquid counter irritant preparations have been implicated in many poisoning cases. With the availability of many elegant semi-solid preparations, products like camphorated oil should perhaps no longer be recommended

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# INJURY TIME

## PAIN KILLING

### PAYS OFF

Courtesy Reckitt & Colman



About 10 per cent of the total adult population in the UK were involved in sports-type injuries in the last twelve months. Two thirds of this 10 per cent were men and 50 per cent of the injuries were sprained muscles. And in a quarter of the injuries, some form of rub, spray lotion or cream was used.

So the market potential for topical application is immense. "Leisure" activities are becoming more popular and more accessible. It is estimated that well over one million people play football and rambling has an even higher participation than football. The energy crisis which is now a way of life, may close the swimming pools but walking uses very little public "energy" though much private!

But not all injuries occur in sport. The series of Ellimans' advertisements in the national Press show the potential uses. The housewife with her aches and pains scrubbing her floor; grandad with his rheumatism sawing a plank; father with his stiff muscles mowing the lawn; and junior with his stiff sprained muscles in football gear.

#### Themed displays

Small themed displays of topical analgesics at appropriate seasons linked with other products may provoke interest and an impulse buy, "just in case"!

There are two main areas in this market—the "ethicals" and the "semi-ethicals". The first includes such products as Alipan, Movelat, PR spray and Skefron. It is estimated to be worth about £3.9m at rrp and showed a 13 per cent growth in the last year.

The second group, the OTC products, includes Ralgex, Deep Heat, Ellimans, Radian B and Sloans. This market is valued at between £1.4 and £2.25m and estimates give 12 to 17 per cent growth in the last year. However only 40 per cent of this growth was due to volume increase, 60 per cent being due to price increase. Deep Heat and Ralgex spray are joint number ones and between them account for about 50 per cent of the market. However, there is a very definite brand loyalty in this market. Ellimans universal embrocation which surrendered some years ago the "Royal-for-Animals" version to the veterinary-only area (thereby disappointing many who believed what helped a horse must be twice as good for humans!) has a steady 8 per cent share of the market.

The Radian range from Radiol is about to receive its biggest ever advertising campaign. In the light of the television test last autumn, the company has decided to revert to a wholly Press campaign which

they believe to be more cost-effective. In the coming heavy sales period, September to March, three times as many spaces as last year are booked in the national dailies, Sundays and women's weekly and monthly magazines. The introduction of Radian B spray in its "environmentalist" can (the propellant is compressed air) has complemented the well established Radian-B liniment.

LRC Products obviously consider television advertising an essential part of their campaign for their joint brand leader Ralgex. It has been regularly advertised on television for the last seven years. The company claims a brand share rise to 27 per cent in 1978 compared to 24 per cent in 1977 and this has encouraged LRC to invest more money in advertising taking them, hopefully, to a brand share of 30 per cent. This year, for the first time, Ralgex is being advertised in major regional, daily and Sunday newspapers. Starting the end of August it is timed to coincide with the start of the winter sports. LRC will be offering the "biggest ever" trade bonus for Ralgex and an improved display will be available later in the year to coincide with the television campaign.

Joint leader Deep Heat will also receive "massive" advertising support through the autumn and winter. There will be television coverage in some areas plus promotion in the national Press and national magazines. Deep Heat, always popular with sportsmen, will be supplied to the Great Britain team competing in the 1980 Olympic Games.

#### Strong brand loyalty

Brand awareness and brand loyalty are very strong in the oral analgesic market. The market value has been placed at £35-£36m but volume sales have remained fairly static. However, Nicholas Laboratories believe that the OTC market has shown recent volume growth through chemists. Figures for May/June show a 10 per cent increase on the same period last year but Nicholas say this should be treated with caution as the market fluctuates widely month to month. They reiterate high brand loyalty and admit that even the brand leaders cannot claim more than a 15 per cent share through pharmacies.

Brand leaders in this section appear to be Anadin and Disprin with a 12 per cent share of the chemist market each, Panadol a fairly close third at 9 per cent and Hedex and Phensic with 4 per cent each. Reckitt & Colman claim a 60 per cent share of the soluble aspirin market and believe this sector "will enjoy signi-

ficant expansion in the near future". They say the public are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of solubility. Starting mid-September, Disprin will have the "strongest ever burst of advertising" with a total spend of £600,000 during the whole winter. The commercial featuring "Wait a minute, Harry" first shown last autumn will be used again.

Nicholas, who have maintained a heavy level of advertising support for Aspro Clear since its launch, will be spending a record £650,000 during the next 12 months—mostly on television. The company has also recently introduced a 30-tablet pack which now accounts for about 30 per cent of Aspro Clear sales. Marketing manager, Graeme Hannah, believes that this is due to established Aspro Clear users switching to the larger pack while new users help maintain sales levels of the 16s pack. Nicholas say they have identified two distinct types of analgesic user—those who prefer the soluble form and those who prefer a more conventional form.

#### Children's market

In the children's analgesic market Junior Disprin claims to be brand leader. Reckitts say it outsells its nearest competitor by almost 4 to 1, and it has a 2 per cent share of the total analgesic market in chemists—fairly high when considering the brand leaders have only 12 per cent. Panets baby syrup, by Optrex, is a paracetamol based syrup for mothers who prefer this analgesic.

Hedex, launched 10 years ago, claims to be the fastest growing leading branded analgesic and Sterling Health say that during 1978 it became the leading paracetamol-based branded analgesic. During 1979 volume sales have been up 14 per cent compared with the same period in 1978. The company intends to continue its heavyweight television support. A national burst is planned just before the peak selling winter months.

As Wellcome say, the one sector of the analgesic market the pharmacist can truly call his own is the OTC codeine-based analgesic. They value the market for these analgesics at about £4m. The division of this market between codeine and aspirin and codeine and paracetamol is fairly even, as it is in the total analgesic market. Fison's Cojene has a 1½ per cent share of the analgesics market. The company says that their promotional strategy has been to highlight Cojene as an aid for the relief of rheumatic pain and in this respect they have been pleased with the response.



## Invisible contract

I do not wish to dwell on the latest "non-event", namely the increase in notional salary to £8,500, but would like to know how the media happened to be present at the Elephant and Castle. I don't need to expand on the Minister's next Press release, "I do not know why chemists are still moaning I've just given them a 45 per cent increase" but could I please know what happens about overpayments to dispensing doctors? In fact it is impossible for the PSNC to negotiate with the Department of Health on the basis of paragraph 10 of the interim statement of the independent assessment panel (*C&D*, August 11, p227) which makes all attempts at negotiation totally meaningless.

Since 1976 I have attempted to obtain a copy of "the contract" which both PSNC and the Department state that contractors are bound by. I have personally asked past and present chairmen of the Central NHS (Chemist Contractors) Committee and PSNC and their officers, Mr David Ennals, Mr Roland Moyle, Mr Donald Anderson (my local MP), the Welsh Office, the administrator of West Glamorgan FPC, to send or obtain for me a copy of this document, which has been used to fetter the activities of contractors and to bind them to working conditions which would be unacceptable to other workers.

In December 1977 I disputed a claim by Mr Donald Ross to "trust PSNC to effect a fair contract for all". For my sins in questioning this statement I was villified by Mr R. Worby, then chairman of PSNC, and taken to task by your columnist Xrayser. It is therefore most galling now to find that a panel of experts concede that there is no actual contract in existence thus supporting my contentions and disproving statements made by both the Department and PSNC, and it would appear that contractors have been led blindly since 1964.

If we gain no new financial settlement from the panel, I will count the proceedings as a complete failure if we do not at least obtain a contract which will be binding on both contractors (what a misnomer) and more importantly, the Department—in fact, this should be the immediate task.

**R. Booker**  
Swansea

## Why no money?

I am bemused by the beneficence of our successful negotiations with the Department of Health! A 46 per cent increase will once and for all solve all our problems.

However, I do have one problem and that is in explaining to my young son why it means we don't actually get any money? He doesn't understand it and I,

who must confess that the machinations of high finance elude me, also fail to understand that I have had an increase.

Equally, I cannot explain to the poor ignorant boy how it is that the Government with all its massive investment in staff (they can afford them) and computer hardware has been managing to overpay me for the past four years. I must be stupid, because I fondly imagined that it was the other way around. Similarly, I am at a loss to explain the happiness of our negotiators with the result? I think we deserve what we get, because we stand for it!

**Gordon D. Conway**  
London NW10

## Multinationals

Mr Jerry Shulman of the Socialist Medical Association (*Letters*, August 11) asks (in the context of reactions to the report of the recent Royal Commission on the NHS) whether an ABPI spokesman "would care to elaborate on the suggestion that some multinationals disguise their true profits by selling drug ingredients to their British subsidiaries at vastly inflated prices which bear no relation to real costs". In the same letter he implies that the NHS serves to provide "a bottomless pit of unlimited profit to be extracted without accountability by drug companies", illustrating his argument with selected "facts" taken from a few old newspaper cuttings.

Mr Shulman seems unaware of the workings of the pharmaceutical price regulation scheme in the UK, which serves to ensure that the situation he postulates does not to any degree reflect the reality of medicine use in the UK.

In proposing limited list prescribing and the abolition of pharmaceutical manufacturers' brand names, the Royal Commission on the NHS made no attempt to gauge the economic consequences of such actions for the UK or the NHS. Had part of the £980,000 spent by the Commission been devoted to researching this area there can be little doubt that its proposals would have been found to be financially detrimental. And whether they would have been advantageous in encouraging more rational prescribing practices may be thought questionable, especially when the problems associated with medicine innovation and information diffusion are considered in detail.

Mr Shulman might perhaps have spent his time more usefully examining issues like recent attacks by some European interests on the British pharmaceutical price regulation scheme, which is now alleged to contravene EEC legislation. However, there are of course in practice limits to the extent to which any amateur, however well-meaning, even if he or she happens to be appointed to a Royal Commission, can grasp adequately complex and important issues like those which relate to the making and selling of medicines for and to the NHS.

**P. F. Lumley**  
*Manager, information services, ABPI*

## Support for MSD

Chemists like myself who disapprove of present wholesaling discounts and all its implications, have one good answer to the NAPD in its threatened advertising campaign to doctors. We must support MSD—my way will be to promote their Tyrozets in future and should other companies wish to follow MSD I will do all I can to support their over-the-counter lines also.

MSD must be congratulated and supported for their insistence in cutting margins to the wholesalers. Has not the NAPD realised that, should they succeed in any small way in this campaign of recommending to doctors prescribing of generic methyldopa, they will be helping to direct business towards the Cox's, APS's and Kerfoot's etc, who will gladly supply the retail chemist direct at much more favourable terms than NAPD wholesalers can possibly do?

Think again NAPD—better to have some of the cake than none at all. The next campaign must then be from the generic manufacturers highlighting their preferential terms to us, missing out the wholesalers altogether. How about it you generic manufacturers! That could make a difference of well over £800 per month in MSD goods alone in my business if my doctors swung over to generic prescribing. That would be £800 my local wholesaler would not get at some future stage.

Continuing my theme of reps not calling, I acknowledge Xrayser's comments (*C&D*, August 25, p275) but surely when a customer returns an aerosol that does not work or a bottle of say Clinitest which the customer claims has gone "soggy", we all replace these as part of our goodwill. But how do you all get your refunds back on these numerous lines. My local wholesalers will not accept responsibility for these "damages" and they just mount up on our shelves. Can anyone advise me how they successfully claim for such returns when no particular rep calls from one year to the next?

Let me add conversely to what I have written that the majority of my reps who do call are tremendously helpful as are the firms they represent, but after a quick calculation I note the following about company reps I do not see: In any year I dispense up to £1,000 in Distalgesic, up to £1,000 in Squibb products, £2,000 or more in Schering's "pill", up to £2,000 in ICI's Inderal, and over £2,000 in SKF products, yet we see no reps from these companies. These are cases where I feel that a once-a-year call at least is justified.

**C. P. Caplan**  
Yeadon, Leeds

## Price records

No Sir! M. Shiers, I'm afraid the increase in the price of Cetavlex cream is not a record. (August 18, p259). Surely the price increase of Fersamal tablets must rate as such—£0.37½p to £1.08 pre-Budget and now £1.15. I have



no doubt that Glaxo will be able to justify this if only to say it "brings it into line with other similar products", which often seems to be given as a legitimate reason.

**K. Morrish**  
Bridport, Dorset

At the time of the price rises (June 4), Glaxo said that "the increases conform to the Price Regulation Scheme and in some cases represent economic prices for 'low demand or minor products'."—Editor.

## Calling experts on 'antiques'

I have five bottles of perfume essence (three of them still with their chamois seals intact) which must be quite old; although I cannot date them. They are: —1 bottle approx 8oz triple extract Violette de Parme by Blondeau et Cie; 1 bottle approx 8oz triple extract (perfume unknown) also by Blondeau; 1 bottle approx 4oz extract triple concentrate aux fleurs Violette de Parme by Bertrand Freres, Grasse (marketed through S. Maw & Sons, distributors); 1 similar but only a quarter full; 1 bottle approx 10oz (half full) extrait quadruple Lily of the Valley by Spurway & Cie of Cannes and Grasse. I would be most grateful if any readers could tell me if these items are of any value or use. Letters to this correspondent may be sent care of the C&D office—Editor

## More qualifications to be profitable

I have just had my annual stock-take and besides the usual box full of out-of-date antibiotics, etc, I find that due to a change in local doctors I have quite a collection of "ethicals" that no one else orders—a problem that would not affect the dispensing doctors. Perhaps in the future pharmacists may have to qualify in medicine in order to get a more profitable contract!

**A. C. G. Florence**  
Angus

## Advice on Nigerian drug trade

I shall be in the UK to attend the Conference in Exeter. My contact address in London is London Park Hotel, Elephant & Castle, London SE11 (01-735 9191). If there is any pharmaceutical company who may wish to contact me about the drug trade in Nigeria with emphasis on pharmaceutical registration, they are free to contact me at the above address or through C&D.

I have published a booklet on drug registration in Nigeria entitled "Guide to Registration of Pharmaceuticals in Nigeria."

**Andrew Egboh,**  
Lagos, Nigeria

# COMPANY NEWS

## Macarthy's reducing uneconomic accounts

Macarthy's are examining the economics of continuing their supplies to customers who only use their service occasionally and who place the bulk of their business with another supplier.

H. B. Dorling Ltd recently sent letters to some customers stating that it has been decided to limit service from the Dagenham depot (which specialises in OTC products) to those having an account worth at least £1,000 a month with a Macarthy's depot. Customers who have received NPA products from Dagenham will deal with Dartford after August 31 if they are unwilling to bring the Macarthy's account up to £1,000.

In their group review for 1979, the company states that, whilst its philosophy is directed towards encouraging these customers to use their service to a greater extent, they have to acknowledge that small value accounts are uneconomic. The company is, accordingly, reducing their number of customers. The concentration of business towards a particular wholesaler is likely to continue with much greater emphasis being placed on the ability to supply the complete package. This includes the distribution of non-prescription drugs. Macarthy's admit that, in common with other major wholesalers, they are offering some sort of price inducement for given levels of business. "We are now seeing an increasing number of retail pharmacists selecting as their wholesaler the company who can offer the best overall package in terms of both service and price," the company states in its group review for 1979.

Since the end of the financial year, Macarthy's have also decided to close their Manchester depot and combine its activities with that of Worsley. The company, which owns the 64-strong Savory & Moore chemists chain, recently announced that they are proposing a rights issue to raise over £3m to invest in expansion and a new laboratory.

The company's chairman, Mr A. R. Ritchie, says rapid expansion over the past three years has called for a significant additional investment in net current assets, a trend which is expected to continue. Capital expenditure for the current year is expected to be about £1.9m, including £0.6m for improvements to the Macarthy's Laboratories' factory at Romford and the construction of a new factory for Dales Pharmaceuticals in Yorkshire. The total capital expenditure of £1.9m does not include any provision for the cost of additional retail chemists shops which may be purchased should suitable opportunities occur. Against this background, the Board has decided that it is desirable to raise additional equity

capital by way of the rights issue.

In their group review for 1979, it is stated that the company's policy is not to increase the number of pharmacies for its own sake, but to develop by modernisation, resiting and acquisition of viable businesses. They now have average turnovers per branch of £180,000, compared with £150,000 last year. The split between dispensing and counter sales is 45 to 55 per cent respectively, the ratio varying from shop to shop.

In addition, exports from John Bell & Croyden, a subsidiary of Macarthy's and a well known supplier of pharmaceutical, surgical and health aid products in Wigmore Street, London, increased from just over 10 per cent to a new figure of £377,288.

For the group as a whole, the managing director, Mr A. L. Slow, reports another successful year, with sales increasing by 32 per cent and profits before tax by 18 per cent.

## Beecham group to acquire Jovan

Beecham Group have made an agreed offer of \$85m for the American fragrance manufacturer, Jovan Inc. A Beecham spokesman told C&D on Wednesday that Jovan had developed a middle-range mass market appeal in the USA, building up to \$78m annual sales in only 10 years. It is too early to say anything about plans, the spokesman added.

Thomas Christy Ltd, who have distributed Jovan in the UK for the past five years, say they have not yet heard from their principles about the future. Jovan distribute for Yardley in the USA.

## Sales agreement in Northern Ireland

Wigglesworth Ltd have announced a new agreement with Norbrook Laboratories of Northern Ireland. From September 1, Norbrook have taken responsibility for sales and distribution of all Wigglesworth products in Northern Ireland.

Wigglesworth, together with the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Company and Willows Francis Veterinary, is a member of the Willows Francis Group. Norbrook will act exclusively for all three companies in Northern Ireland while Willows Francis Veterinary will be undertaking sales, marketing and distribution of Norbrook's range of veterinary "ethicals" in the rest of the UK.

## Abbott expand

Abbott Laboratories have embarked on a further build-up of its Irish operations with work on a £6.6m expansion of its hospital products facility at Sligo. The Sligo plant, built in 1974, makes the butterfly winged infusion set and catheters: It will also produce other new Abbott disposable hospital products.

*Continued on p332*



# COMPANY NEWS MARKET NEWS

(continued from p331)

## ICI recovery but not to last

Second quarter profits for ICI at £162m indicate a marked recovery from the first quarter's figure of £98m, and are £23m up on the corresponding period last year. The figure includes £17m oil profits, chiefly from the Ninian Field.

The improvement was strongest in the UK and Western Europe, due mainly to an increased volume of business (11 per cent) but also to price increases.

However, ICI, whose results generally act as a barometer for the stock exchange, are expecting some downturn in business in the second half of this year, although experts think this will depend on the exchange rate and the timing and severity of the recession. It is noteworthy that the company's exports improved to a record £285m during the last quarter, in spite of the strength of sterling.

## Ransom profits up

Profits before tax for William Ransom & Son Ltd were up 9.4 per cent at £688,826. Turnover at £2,547,838 for the year ended March 31, 1979 was similar to the previous year (£2,541,803) but exports accounted for only 41 per cent of sales compared with 50 per cent in 1977/8.

The chairman, Mr Michael Ransom said the move to the new factory (due to be in September) and the strengthening of the pound would have the greatest influence on results for the current 12 months. A strong pound would cause continued difficulties in export markets. Raw materials should be cheaper but as the company had to keep large stocks in case of crop failure and scarcities it would be several months before the advantage worked through to costs. The benefits of the new building would be more apparent in the results for 1980/81 than for the current year.

## Chinese oils short

London, August 29: Buyers are experiencing difficulty in booking several Chinese oils in certain forward positions such as January-February and February-March 1980. It is doubtful whether the usual reason of "no stocks" appertains on this occasion but rather that the Chinese are holding off so that they can do more business at the next Canton fair due to be held in October. If buyers here and elsewhere bought their supplies now, attendance at the fair would be depleted, it is suggested.

From Sicily bergamot and lemon oils have rocketed in price and in the United States, after the bumper crops of peppermint and spearmint of last year, the forecast is for considerably smaller crops this year. Weather conditions last winter are blamed for poorer plants especially spearmint where it is expected only one cutting instead of two will be made. English-distilled ginger oil is dearer but those of cardamom, cinnamon and pepper are lower than previously.

In pharmaceutical chemicals a number of imported vitamins, sulphadiazine and tetracycline are lower because of currency fluctuations. Trading generally in all sectors was quiet during the week shortened by the bank holiday. Prices of botanicals were mainly repeated.

## Pharmaceutical chemicals

**Ascorbic acid:** from £5.94 kg lots down to £4.85 in 1 metric ton lots as to source.  
**Caffeine:** BP anhydrous £5.16 kg in 100-kg lots; £4.80 in 500-kg.  
**Iodine:** Resublimed £7.15 kg in 250-kg lots; crude £4.90 kg in 1-ton lots.  
**Isoniazid:** BP 1973 £4 kg in 300-kg lots.  
**Sodium phosphate:** monobasic BP crystalline £1.19 kg in 50-kg lots.  
**Sulphadiazine:** BP 68, £5.10 kg in 250-kg lots.  
**Tetracycline:** Hydrochloride £16.50 kg; oxytetracycline £18.50 in 250-500-kg lots.  
**Theobromine:** Alkaloid £6.90 kg for 500-kg lots.  
**Thiamine:** Hydrochloride/mononitrate 1 kg £21.37; 5 kg £20.07; 25 kg £19.37. Imported £15 kg (500-kg).

## Crude drugs

**Aloes:** Cape £1,060 ton spot; £1,055, cif, Curacao nominally £2,240, cif, no spot.

**Camphor:** Natural powder £5.10 kg spot and cif.  
**Cascara:** £1.45 metric ton spot; £995, cif.  
**Dandelion:** Spot £1,945 metric ton spot; £1,745, cif.  
**Gentian root:** £1,840 metric ton spot; £1,765, cif.  
**Hydrastis:** Spot £29.75, kg; no cif.  
**Menthol:** (kg) Brazilian £6.05 spot; £5.85, cif. Chinese £6.20 duty paid; £5.50 cif.  
**Podophyllum:** Root Chinese no spot; £400 metric ton, cif.  
**Quillaia:** Spot £995 metric ton; £720, cif.  
**Rhubarb:** Chinese rounds 60 per cent plinky £3.30 kg spot; £3, cif.  
**Saffron:** Mancha superior £740 kg spot; Rio £785.  
**Sarsaparilla:** Jamaican £1,915 metric ton spot; £1,845, cif.

## Essential oils

**Cardamom:** English-distilled £250 kg.  
**Cinnamon:** Ceylon leaf £2.50 kg spot; £2.45, cif; bark, English-distilled £155.  
**Ginger:** Chinese £42 kg spot; £40.50, cif. English distilled £105.  
**Lemon:** Sicilian best grades about £20 kg in drum lots.  
**Lime:** West Indian £13.50 kg spot.  
**Mandarin:** Old crop £23 kg spot.  
**Origanum:** Spanish 70 per cent £22-£24 kg.  
**Peppermint:** (kg) Arvensis-Brazilian £4.35 spot; £4.25 cif. Chinese £3.20 spot; £3.10, cif. Piperata-American from £14.25 spot; £13.75, cif.  
**Pepper:** English-distilled ex black £125 kg.  
**Spearmint:** Chinese £10.35 kg spot; £9.60, cif. American £12-£12.50 as to source, cif.

The prices given are those obtained by importers or manufacturers for bulk quantities and do not include value added tax. They represent the last quoted or accepted prices as we go to press.

## COMING EVENTS

### Monday, September 3

Weald of Kent Branch, Pharmaceutical Society, Postgraduate centre, Kent and Sussex Hospital, Mount Ephraim, Tunbridge Wells, at 8 pm  
Mr Fergus Ankhorn on "Coincidences."

### Wednesday, September 5

Reading Branch, Pharmaceutical Society, "Mandwa House," West Drive, Sonning, at 8 pm.  
Chairman's at home.

### Advance information

**Diploma Course in Cosmetic Science,** Polytechnic of South Bank, Borough Road, London SE1. Course starts September 24. Registration September 19, 9.30 to 12

**1979 National Conference of Institute of Purchasing and Supply,** September 26-28, Sheffield, Theme "Enterprise." Further details from the Institute, IPS House, High Street, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 7HG.

**Course of three lectures on pharmacology of CNS,** October 1, 8, and 15, Postgraduate centre, Kent and Sussex Hospital, Mount Ephraim, Tunbridge Wells, at 8 pm. Further details from Miss M. Wallis, 218 St Johns Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

**Oral Cavity: Diseases and Drug Treatment,** one day symposium, September 20, Chelsea College, Manrese Road. Applications (£3) to the secretariat, Society for Drug Research, c/o Institute of Biology, 41 Queen's Gate, London SW7

**Old Product Development,** September 28, British Academy Conference Centre, London W1. One day seminar on how to market existing products profitably. Further details from Company Communications Centre, 50 Tufton Street, London SW1

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Avant-Garde Fashion Accessories Limited specialists and leading suppliers of Accessory Lines are expanding their sales force and require two ambitious hardworking sales executives.

Experience in the Trade, though desirable is not essential, what is required is a successful track record in selling consumer products to retail outlets and key accounts. These vacancies will probably attract persons in the 25/35 age group.

Apply in writing to:

Managing Director,  
Avant-Garde Fashion Accessories Limited,  
Astra House,  
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## SHOPFITTING

### SHOPKIT

Special September offer to celebrate our record July turnover (an amazing 205.03% up on 1978) we are offering all our customers placing orders in September worth more than £600, a FREE Tel-Gard simulated T.V. Security Camera.

Call at our Peterborough showroom to see high Shopkit quality or telephone at any time for illustrated leaflets (24-hour cheap rate service) Peterborough 0733 265263; Manchester 061 228 2561; Birmingham 021 643 4636; or write to

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price details available for  
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slimGard is a trade mark

1 September 1979